

THROUGH
STRESS AND STORM
THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES

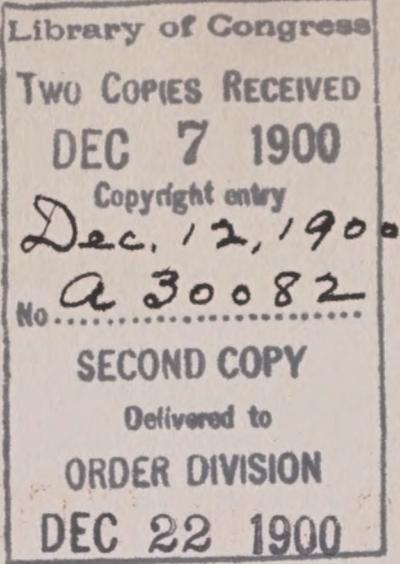
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
Sergeant Grover Hart.....	5
CHAPTER II.	
The Country Doctor.....	16
CHAPTER III.	
The Rescue.....	40
CHAPTER IV.	
Evelyn's Note.....	63
CHAPTER V.	
The Doctor's Reply.....	99
CHAPTER VI.	
Evelyn's Response.....	124
CHAPTER VII.	
Playing with Fire.....	132
CHAPTER VIII.	
A Provisional Acceptance.....	161
CHAPTER IX.	
Acting in Haste.....	190
CHAPTER X.	
"All's Well that Ends Well".....	213

Through Stress and Storm.

I.

Sergeant Grover Hart.

“DETAIL for picket to-morrow, Sergeant Grover Hart, of Company D.”

The tent into which Orderly-Sergeant Knight crawled, rather than walked, to give the foregoing order, was one of thousands of the same kind used by both officers of the line and soldiers in the campaign of the army of the Potomac, from the Rapidan to the James, in the year 1864. It was called by courtesy a shelter tent, but was commonly spoken of by the soldiers as a “dog” tent, because it resembled a dog kennel more than a human habitation.

Its structure was very simple. Two slender, forked sticks, about four feet long, were set up

six feet apart, with the ends of a light pole, six feet long, laid in the forks. On this pole was stretched a covering consisting of two pieces of thin, cotton cloth six feet square, fastened together so as to form one piece six feet wide and nearly twelve feet long, the ends being fastened to the ground by short stakes. Another piece six feet square closed one end of this rude shelter, if such it could be called. For the wind blew where it listed, so far as a fabric of this kind was concerned, the rain evidently regarded it as a pleasant joke, and the cold entered without ceremony.

The interior of the tent which Orderly Knight entered presented substantially the same appearance as did the inside of nearly every one of the thousands and tens of thousands of tents which formed an unbroken line, in the rear of the many miles of strong earthworks and frown-

ing batteries which threatened the defenders of the beleaguered city of Petersburg.

A thick carpet of pine boughs covered the ground, and on this three coarse blankets were spread. Two short, leather straps, looped over the ridgepole, held three burnished Springfield rifles, loaded and primed. At the rear end of the tent, depending from short branches of the sapling which formed one of the supports to the ridge-pole, were three haversacks containing food, three tin canteens filled with water, and three cartridge boxes, each holding forty rounds of ammunition. At the same end of the tent three knapsacks lay in a row, each affording as comfortable a substitute for a pillow as was obtainable under the circumstances.

This disposition of arms and accouterments, had evidently been made not so much for convenience as for availability at any moment.

Two of the soldiers occupying the tent, Johnson and Parker, had lain down for the night, after removing their coats and shoes only; for during that battle year of the Civil War, the men of the Army of the Potomac were for more than two hundred days almost constantly engaged in conflict with the enemy; seldom enjoying an hour undisturbed by missiles from hostile weapons, and not often allowing their foemen to forget their proximity for a moment; and the necessity for their being at all times on the alert, always ready to make or repel an attack, was so great, that the men who were with Grant in 1864 could say with the men who were with Nehemiah, more than two thousand years before, "None of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing;" and washing days in the army were neither frequent nor regular in their coming.

The third occupant of the tent, a youthful soldier with a frank countenance and clear, honest eyes, sat reading a book by the light of a candle held in the ring of a bayonet, the point of the weapon being thrust into the ground. He received his assignment to duty for the following day with a pleasant smile and an, "All right, orderly," and at once resumed his reading.

But as soon as the orderly sergeant was out of hearing, the tent-mates of Sergeant Grover Hart began to assail him with a fusillade of badinage, of the sort with which they and their comrades were wont to divert their thoughts from the dangers and hardships to which they were constantly exposed.

"Say, Hart," began Parker, "I'm really afraid to have you on picket, to-morrow. You'll do well enough through the day, but

10 Through Stress and Storm.

when night comes you'll be looking at the stars, and never see the Johnny rebs coming; and they'll gather you in, sure. You'd better go to the captain, pretend that you're sick and get excused, or else pray for cloudy weather."

"You haven't counted the stars to-night, Grove," said Johnson, taking up the matter so as to give Parker time to invent some new bit of sarcasm. "You'd better go out and look after them. Some of 'em may have got away."

"Grove has had no eyes for the stars or for anything else since he got hold of that book that his sweetheart sent him," said Parker, replying to Johnson's suggestion.

"It wasn't his sweetheart who sent that book," said Johnson, continuing the conversation with Parker for Hart's benefit. "It was Emeline Somebody-or-other who sent it. I saw her name in the book. And she didn't send it

to Grove either. You see Emeline is a giddy young thing of forty-five or thereabouts, and lives in Philadelphia. And when some of the folks sent a box of good things to the soldiers, Emeline packed that book in the box, hoping it would fall into the hands of some gallant and good-looking young officer, and that would be ‘so romantic!’ But as ill luck would have it, or on account of some ‘unpropitious star,’ as Hart would say, the book was given to Grove. Don’t I wish that Emeline could look in here now, and see what kind of a jay it is that her book fell to! My! Wouldn’t her vinegar face turn the milky-way into clamber?”

Here Johnson stopped; but Parker was by this time ready to go on.

“Say, Johnson, I’ll tell you what I’m going to do. ‘When this cruel war is over’ and I go to Philadelphia, as I certainly shall before go-

ing home to Ohio, I'll call on Emeline. I can find her address in Hart's book. I'll pretend that I've come to tell her of the sad fate of Colonel Highfalutin, who died on the battlefield covered with glory and murmuring her name. That will be romance in more ways than one. In that way I can see what she looks like and tell you."

"You'll probably find that she looks like sixty," said Johnson.

"Oh, she is a girl so blithe and gay,
And she lives in Phil-a-ma-del-phi-a!"

sang Parker mockingly.

"Her face is so fair, and her clothes so fine,
They call her the charming Emeline,"

responded Johnson.

"Will you two idiots shut up?" said Hart
coloring angrily. "Haven't you sense enough

to know that such talk isn't even decent when it's about a girl who has done a kindness to us soldiers? In the first place, though you fellows will wait a long time before you find out what her name is, it isn't Emeline. In the next place, instead of being an old maid, or even a young woman, she's a little girl. She has heard or read of the hardships and privations we suffer, and has tried to do something to make our lives more pleasant, or at least more endurable. I am only sorry that the love and good will for the soldiers which sprang up in the heart of a little girl and blossomed into a beautiful deed, should have suffered the fate of being like a pearl cast before swine."

He blew out the candle spitefully and lay down, first carefully placing in his knapsack the little book he had been reading.

"I'm glad those fellows didn't know how

much their talk cut me up," he said to himself. True, they were talking only in fun; but it couldn't have hurt me worse if what they said had been about a dear friend of mine, or even a sister. Of course the boys meant no disrespect to the girl; but the opportunity to tease and annoy me was too good to be lost.

"I'll read the little girl's book and then send it home so that it can never fall into the hands of either Johnson or Parker, to be made sport of by them. I don't need it to help me remember either her name or her address. It is a good book and a helpful one, and I'll write to her and tell her so, and thank her for sending it to me.

But how familiar her name seems! I am sure that I have never seen it nor heard it, and yet it comes into my mind as if I had both seen and heard it hundreds and hundreds of times, and

for a great many years. But I have never been in Philadelphia and don't know a single soul there. Where on earth can I have seen or heard that name? Perhaps it wasn't on earth that I knew it. Now that I think of it, it must have been when I was living on Neptune three hundred and fifty millions of years ago!

Laughing silently at this—to him—strange conceit, he fell asleep, to dream of flying from world to world and from star to star, in search of the one whose name was written in a round, unformed, schoolgirl hand on the flyleaf of the book he had been reading, thus:

“EVELYN AHERLY,

“No. 78 Tenth Avenue,

“Philadelphia, Pa.”

II.

The Country Doctor.

THE highway along which Dr. Grover Hart was slowly driving, on a bright morning in June, two years after the close of the war, was as uninteresting and devoid of everything which could be called picturesque, as a country road could well be; but to one with sharp eyes, quick ears, and a mind habituated to recognize with keen appreciation the charms which Nature displays to those who intelligently woo her, it was a way of light, beauty and melody.

At the bridge over the river which formed the line of demarcation between the village and the country, the road turned slightly to the right, and thence followed the general direction of the stream. Neither road nor river followed

a straight course, but each took its way without reference to the course of the other; the road never receding from the river to any considerable distance, and in places approaching the bank of the stream as closely as was consistent with the safety of those who had occasion to pass that way.

This road had been a thoroughfare from about the time when Jesus of Nazareth was teaching in Galilee and Judea. It was first traveled by the aborigines of the central part of the North American continent, that mysterious people whom we call the mound builders; a race of which there is no history. The forms of the countless multitudes and generations of men, women and children who once peopled this portion of the world pass before the imaginative eye of the antiquarian like ghostly shadows, coming out of impenetrable darkness,

18 Through Stress and Storm.

and disappearing in still deeper darkness, leaving behind them not one written or engraved character, word or line to tell their story.

It was that strange, unknown people who first used this way in going from one of their villages to another, the site of these villages being where two large towns now stand. When fierce hordes of alien enemies swept down from the northwest, the effeminate mound builder retired before the stronger barbarians almost without a struggle. He left his villages and cultivated fields to become a part of the wilderness, the hunting ground of the conquering savages.

These savages we habitually miscall the American Indian. There are two objections to this appellation: The first is, that they were not American by ancestry; their ancestors were emigrants from Asia. The second is that

their ancestors did not live in India, but were Mongol-Tartars from the region which is now the northeastern part of China.

In process of time the path which had been trodden by the mound builders, became a runway for deer. Afterward the savage hunter appropriated it, and it became an Indian trail. This trail the white man followed when he came across the Alleghanies, with wife and children, to make a home in what was then the far West. And thus the trail became a thoroughfare, known to this day as the Territorial Road, because it was used as a highway when the state through which it runs was a territory.

But it is safe to assert that never was any mound builder, Indian or pioneer, so interested in the scene disclosed to his eye as was Grover Hart at every foot of the distance traversed by him on that lovely June morning. The first

20 Through Stress and Storm.

part of the way led through a dense forest, the small trees growing so close to the traveled part of the highway as to leave barely room for two vehicles to pass each other.

On the left side of the road, a dilapidated worm fence was fast falling to decay. Along one of the lower rails of this fence a ground squirrel was coursing, leaping lightly from rail to rail at the corners of the fence, keeping a few feet ahead of the horse, but looking back at him continually as if challenging him to a race. After keeping on in this way for a time, and finding that the horse did not seem to be inclined to accept the challenge, the squirrel left the fence and plunged into the wood. At the same time he gave chattering, clamorous utterance to what Dr. Hart interpreted as being vituperative ridicule of the horse, in language quite unlike the love-call of this little rodent, which

had led the early settlers of the country to give him the name "chipmunk."

Bending to the right, the road ran so close to the bank of the river as to bring into view a kingfisher, perched on a dead branch overhanging the stream, fishing without hook, line or bait. One could hardly look at him without laughing at his comical appearance, his dumpy body, short neck and awkwardly tilted head. To the dwellers in the waters below, he was a noiseless thunderbolt. Shooting from his perch like an arrow, his feet drawn close to his body, wings folded and beak pointing straight forward, he would cleave the water as silently as a fish swims. In an instant he would return to the surface, with or without a prize, as his skill or luck might determine. If successful he flew in silence to one of the trees near by, and there devoured his prey. If he missed his aim, then

on emerging from the water he broke forth into vociferous, strident cackling, like idiotic laughter, as if he were making mirth at his own misadventure.

At almost every foot of the way, the eye of Grover Hart fell upon some object, or his ear caught some sound which filled his sensitive soul with delight. The sheen on the surface of the river; the green of the grass and leaves; the bright hues of the wild flowers; the delicate texture of the mosses; the stately forest trees; the light clouds, flecking with white the azure of the sky; the song of the many varieties of birds then tenanting the woods and fields; the blithe whistle of the oriole, the scream of the hawk, the booming of the partridge; all these, with unnumbered other sights and sounds, were noted by him with the keen zest of hopeful, healthful youth. To him life was joyous; every

breath of the pure, invigorating air a luxury. Everything seen or heard by him was something to be observed, studied, thought upon, appropriated. In this way it became a part of the best and most valuable knowledge one can gain—that which comes from patient, diligent, intelligent observation.

On turning one of the many curves in the road, Dr. Hart became aware of the not altogether pleasing fact that, for at least a part of his ride, he was to have the company of his former tentmate, Richard Parker. The latter was walking in the same direction Dr. Hart was taking, and the doctor recognized him at once by his erect, firm, graceful carriage, and easy, swinging stride. These revealed the infantry soldier who had seen years of service.

The salutation between the two was curt, though kindly:

"Morning, Grove!"

"Morning, Dick. Ride?"

"Don't care if I do. Where you going?"

"Going down to see old Mr. Garbutt. How far are you going?"

"Oh, I've struck a little job down to Callender's. You see Callender has some city cousins come to visit him. Regular swell people, I tell you, and no mistake. The old gentleman—though he isn't very old—has lots of cash, I should say. But he's every inch a gentleman, and no snob. His wife is one of the best-looking women I ever saw. And they have a daughter with them who's prettier than the prettiest picture you ever set your eyes on. Then there's a niece, or something of that sort, with them. She's not so pretty as the daughter, but mighty good looking."

"But what has all that to do with your being at Callender's?" asked Dr. Hart.

"You see it's this way," answered Parker. "These people dropped down on Callender rather unexpected like, and naturally he wants to tidy up a bit about the house. And that's what I'm doing just now. But I just wish you could see those girls, Grove!"

"Why do you want me to see them?" asked Hart indifferently.

But before his question could be answered, a vigorous pull on the reins, a sharp "Whoa" to the horse, and Dr. Hart sprang lightly to the ground.

"What's up now, Grove?" asked Parker.

"I want to look into the nest on that thorn bush and see what that robin is doing."

"That's you, Grove Hart, for all the world! Always poking about to pry into something no

26 Through Stress and Storm.

one else cares a farthing for. That's just as you used to do in the army."

"Look!" exclaimed Hart enthusiastically, holding up a small object between his thumb and forefinger, while the mother bird flew away with a protest and complaint in bird language. "Just look at that egg the first of four from which will come a second brood, or, rather, an extra brood of young. You see the old bird has hatched one brood this year, but in some way the young birds were destroyed very soon after they were hatched. And so the mother instinct leads her to attempt the raising of another brood out of season. For it is past the time for the first brood, and quite too early for the second. Cases of this sort are very rare, and none are mentioned by any ornithologist whose works I have read. But they do occur sometimes, as I have more than once observed."

"Well, what of it?" asked Parker, looking bored.

"What of it?" echoed Hart. "Where are your eyes, man? Don't you see that this little egg which I hold in my fingers, is one of the most wonderful things that God ever created? Look at it! Notice its color, first. Did you ever see anything in nature or art having the exact, delicate shade of blue that you see here? Dyers have a shade of color that they call robin's-egg blue. It resembles the color of this egg about as much as the color of the green blinds on yonder house resembles the green that tinges the waters of the ocean.

"Then think of its structure. First, a thin, firm, porous, spheroidal wall. This is lined with a membrane tough as silk, soft as velvet. Next, a clear, colorless fluid, seven parts of water to one of albumen. Inside of that is a

28 Through Stress and Storm.

beautifully colored globe of albumen, water, oil, soda, lime, phosphorus and other chemical elements in solution. Within this globe is a germinal vesicle containing a nucleal spot, a mere microscopic dot.

“From center to circumference it is a thing of beauty; but you would search it in vain for one indication of life. Lay it aside, and in a few days it will be resolved into its elements, without life or appearance of life.

“But let it have the thought and hope and love of the mother bird, and her brooding care for a few days, and this bit of lifeless matter will soar and sing. God must have taken millions on millions of years learning how to fashion an egg like this.”

“Why, Grove Hart! How dare you say that? If Parson Lett were to hear you talk in that way, he’d call the elders and deacons of your

church together, and have you turned out of the church for blasphemy, as sure as you live."

"And yet good old Parson Lett has no greater reverence for God than I have. And I doubt very much whether he appreciates the power and wisdom of God as highly as I do. And I am sure that he doesn't believe in the immanence of God in all the operations of nature and in all the affairs of the universe as firmly as I do. If Parson Lett were shown this egg, he might not say, as you did, 'What of it?' But he would, very likely, talk about the wise provision which the God of nature has made for the perpetuation of His creatures of every species. He would look upon this egg as something produced in the order of nature, and owing its present existence and future life to its parent birds.

"But to me this egg is the veritable handi-

30 Through Stress and Storm.

work of God. And the life that will be developed in it by and by will be due to the direct action of the will of God, just as we are told that 'God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' "

"Then you don't believe in evolution, that Parson Lett preaches against so often?" said Parker.

"Most certainly I do. And my belief in evolution arises from the observation, study and thought which I have given to the phenomena of nature, wholly apart from what theologians term 'revelation.'

"And by the same means I have been led to believe that God is present in all the operations of that which we call nature. It is to me something more than a filmy, shadowy belief. It is a most profound conviction, one that reaches to the very depths of my being, that all things

which have been, are, or will be—life, death, matter, soul, spirit—all these are plastic material in the hands of God which He fashions as He will; that moment by moment, and age by age, is working out His own great problems, and constantly improving on His own work. That is what evolution means to me.”

“This talk is getting too deep for me, Grove,” said Parker; “and of course you can outtalk me, as you always did in the army. All the same, I can’t understand how what you say can be true, if God has always existed and has always been all-wise.”

“I cannot doubt that God has always existed,” replied Hart; “nor can I doubt that He has always been omniscient. To me it is unthinkable that there was ever a time when God did not possess the sum of all the wisdom that existed in the universe.

32 Through Stress and Storm.

“But this does not prove that God is incapable of increase in wisdom as well as in power and in love. God would not be God if He were so limited as to be incapable of change. And I cannot help believing that God is all the time working out His own problems with the infinite resources at His command—resources which He brings out of His own measureless being—and that He is continually improving on His own work.

“In proof of this, look at the history of this earth since it first became the abode of life. Note how God has, age after age, and, with infinite care and patience, fashioned, remodeled and changed the physical forms and mental qualities of the beings that dwell upon it. Has this been through mere caprice on the part of God?”

“But,” said Parker, who until this time had

failed to manifest a shadow of interest in the talk of his companion, "isn't it more reasonable to believe that all those changes came about through the operation of natural law than to suppose it to be the work of a Creator?"

"I am enough of a Yankee," replied Hart, "to answer your question by asking another. What is meant by the words 'natural law?' There can be no such thing as law, without a lawmaker. No law could prescribe itself. Law is a result of intelligence. A machine which forges nails, or weaves carpets, does so because some one designed it for that purpose. And if the product of the machine changes, it is because some intelligence has willed that it should do so. The supposition that a force, acting wholly without intelligence, could produce results indicating the highest intelligence, is not only illogical, it is wholly inconceivable."

"But," said Parker, as if unwilling to give up the argument; "isn't it more in harmony with our ideas of God's majesty to think of God as having set certain laws in operation, and then leaving them to work out their results, instead of troubling Himself to keep at work every day, like a carpenter or blacksmith?"

"Not if we think of Him as an infinite being," answered Hart. "If He is infinite in power, then one event is to Him as great as any other, and the coloring of a rose leaf as important as the gathering of material with which to form a world.

"If that which has taken place on this earth were all that has happened in the universe there might be some force in your question. But the truth is, that this earth forms so small a part of the universe that an astronomer would tell you that it is relatively hardly worth considering.

He would also tell you that the planet in this solar system which came into being next before the earth was Mars, the ruddy star you can see any morning now, if you get up early enough. It was made only yesterday, but on God's yesterday, not ours; for it was formed millions on millions of years before this earth had a separate existence.

"Now there are on that planet a great number of canals which were dug to carry the waters from the melting icecaps at the poles to the equatorial regions. To dig those canals must have required more labor than has been done on this earth since Adam pruned the trees in the Garden of Eden; so that we know that intelligent beings live there.

"But if we could communicate with them, I don't believe that we should find them such beings as we are. I believe that when God had

36 Through Stress and Storm.

brought the beings who live on Mars up to a high plane of intelligence, though He saw that His work there was good, He wanted to do better, and so He made this earth with its plants, trees and animals, and, last of all, man.

“And when we stop to think that there are many other planets in this solar system, and that there are systems without number in the universe, we get a little idea of the size of God’s workshop in which He is all the time at work.”

“But isn’t this theory of yours in direct conflict with the Bible?” asked Parker.

“Not at all,” answered Hart. “The Bible tells us—and I believe it to be true—that whatever of good men do is pleasing to God. That must mean that God is helped by everything which we try to do for Him. And if it be true that every sincere prayer that we offer to God

enables Him to do better by us; if every righteous act men do helps God in His government of the world; if the little love we give to Him makes Him love us much more; then the power and love of God are increased by the acts, thoughts and feelings of His creatures. And if God is capable of gaining in power and love, why may He not be capable of gaining in wisdom also?

"But I haven't yet finished my answer to your question," Hart continued, somewhat hurriedly, for Parker was beginning to show signs of restlessness under what he was mentally characterizing as a "preachment," though too polite to say so. "I have it also from the Bible that God made man in his own image. That can mean nothing else than that my spirit is, in its higher and better attributes, like unto God's spirit. And among the highest and best emo-

38 Through Stress and Storm.

tions of my being is the desire for knowledge. Ever since I became old enough to study, observe and think, I have given nearly every moment of my spare time to study and observation. My days and nights have been devoted to watching the stars in the sky, delving in the earth under my feet, observing the various forms and manifestations of vegetable and animal life, with which the earth abounds, and trying to learn the truths which are taught in the great book of nature which God keeps open at all times before our eyes.

“Now the desire for knowledge, the longing to be constantly engaged in the search after truth, has become the supreme passion of my life. And with every truth that I discover for myself there comes into my soul a feeling of happiness, because my knowledge has been increased through the operations of my mind.”

"And I say it as reverently as sincerely, that unless my feelings in this regard are akin to something which God feels, then I am not made in His image. But I believe, as confidently as I believe in my own existence, that in every discovery which I make of a truth that is new to me, my mind is following the mind of God. But God is millions of ages ahead of me in His thoughts, and His wisdom is as much greater than mine as His boundless universe is greater than my mortal frame."

III.

The Rescue.

FROM the place where Grover Hart held his discussion—if such it could be called—with Richard Parker, it was less than half a mile to a point where the road curved to the right until it ran along the brow of a declivity sloping down to the bank of the river. On the left a carriage way might be seen leading to some farm buildings, partly concealed among the trees by which they were surrounded. Here Parker stepped out of the vehicle in which he had been riding with Dr. Hart, and walked briskly up the carriage road, leaving the doctor to pursue his way to the home of his patient.

The house at which Parker soon arrived was

of a type by no means uncommon in that neighborhood. It was a large, rectangular building, two stories high, constructed of plain, dull-red brick. The windows contained many panes of glass of small size. The exterior woodwork was painted a staring white, the window blinds a bright green. Four huge, wooden columns upheld a projection of the roof to the front, covering a balcony and a porch.

On this porch Parker observed his employer, John Callender, with his wife and daughter, all attired in what they called their "Sunday best" instead of their ordinary working-day clothes. They were engaged in the, to them, unusual, and not wholly congenial task of entertaining the four other occupants of the porch. These were a gentleman, a lady, and two girls, the four being the "city cousins" of whom Parker had spoken in his talk with Dr. Hart.

The young people formed a little group by themselves. One of the visitors was amusing herself by throwing a ball, to which a string was attached, to a gray kitten, and watching the antics of the latter as the ball was slowly drawn in by the cord, despite the cuffing, clawing and biting of the young mouser.

The younger of the visitors, a girl whose mobile face disclosed every emotion of her mind as plainly as sunlight and shadow are visible in a landscape, sat with an open book resting on her lap. Her eyes were fixed on the face of the daughter of the house, and she was listening attentively and with apparent interest to the words of the latter, who was telling of an incident which had occurred in the neighborhood but a short time before.

The narrative ended, there was a short pause in the conversation, and then the narrator—hav-

ing evidently exhausted her store of entertaining talk for the time—said: “Girls, I’ll tell you what we’ll do. We’ve walked nearly all over this old farm and have been riding all about the country for miles, but we haven’t been down to the river yet. I propose that we take a little stroll down to the bank of the river and get a good view of it. It’s only a short distance from here, and it’s pretty down there at this time of the year.”

“Excuse me, Sarah,” said the older girl; “but suppose you and Evelyn go, and let me stay here. You can do more to entertain me by leaving me to play with this kitten than in any other way. The fact is that with the long journey from Kansas City here, and our going about so much since I’ve been here, I’m dead tired. But Evelyn will be glad to go. She’s always crazy to go where there’s water.”

"Yes," said the younger girl, smiling pleasantly; "I shall be glad to go, I am sure. I am always delighted to be near the water. Aunty says that when I was a baby she could do nothing that would make me so happy as to let me sit on the floor by a shallow tub of water, and paddle in it with my hands to my heart's content. I ought to have been a mermaid, except that I'm not very fond of combing my hair."

Going down the steps, leading from the porch to the ground, the two girls took their way along a footpath bordered on either side by a row of Lombardy poplars. The Lombardy poplar is a Pharisee among trees. It sends its roots straight down into the earth, and its trunk straight into the air. It gathers its boughs close about its stem, as if afraid of contamination. Thus it robs itself of nourishment, air and sunlight, in order that it may give as little

shade and shelter as possible. But it was at one time the fashion in the country to plant the Lombardy poplar. And the dictates of fashion—whether it be in dress, in the style or color of houses, or in the planting of trees—are as servilely obeyed in the country as in the city.

The path followed by the girls ran parallel with the carriage way up which Parker had come from his ride with Grover Hart. It ended, as did the carriage way, at the Territorial Road. After one had crossed the highway it was but a few yards down a steep incline, so steep that the path took a diagonal course down the slope—to the bank of the river.

"I think it's a burning shame," said Sarah Callender, when the two were fairly away from the house, "that you must hurry on home before we've had half a visit from you. Indeed, I've just begun to get acquainted with you."

46 Through Stress and Storm.

"I am more sorry than you," replied Evelyn, "that we must go so soon, for I have enjoyed being here more than I can tell you. But you know that we were detained in Kansas City much longer than we expected. And my uncle has so much to do that he doesn't think that he can stop working on his paintings, even to take the rest that he needs. It is only of late that people have begun to recognize his ability as an artist, and now orders come so fast that he cannot keep up with them. But here, we are at the river. How beautiful it is and how majestic, too!"

"Yes; it is lovely and grand," replied Sarah. "We have a boat in that boathouse. Wouldn't you like to go out on the water for a little while?"

"I should like it of all things," Evelyn answered. "Do you row?"

"Oh, yes; I row a great deal," answered Sarah. "Just help me a little to steady the boat and keep it on the ways. It will go down to the water without pushing. It's afloat now. Get in and take that seat in the stern. I'll row. We'll go up stream first, and then float down."

A few skillful strokes with the oars sent the boat well out into the stream. Then began the more difficult task of pulling against the current, which at that point was rapid and strong. "It will be slow work going up stream," said the rower to Evelyn; "but the floating down with the current will be delightful."

"You row well," said Evelyn, after some moments; "and we are really making good progress. I know that putting my hands in the water as I am doing must hinder your efforts somewhat, but the temptation to do so is too

48 Through Stress and Storm.

strong to be resisted. I love to be on the water and to dip my hands in it; but I didn't quite mean what I said at the house, that I should like to live in the water like a mermaid.

"The fact is I don't like to be in the water at all. We go to the seashore for a short time every summer, but it is very seldom that I can be persuaded to go into the water. Indeed, I am usually afraid to do so; for I fear the sea most when it is in one of its quiet, playful, alluring moods. If I allow it to entice me into its waters it kisses me, caresses me, embraces me; but I know all the time that if I should be off my guard for a moment it would drown me.

"And yet I admire and revere the sea more than I do any other of the great objects or forces on this earth. Mountains are majestic, but the sea is sublime! And it is most sublime when it is in one of its tempestuous moods. Men talk

of ‘the angry ocean.’ But the ocean is never angry; it is too great, too powerful to become angry. When the invisible spirit of the air moves it mightily, then it lifts itself on high and beats the shore with blows that are estimated in their force by tons. Thus it destroys things that are weak, or worthless, or false, and spares only the strong, the enduring and the true.

“And to me it is a type of some men of whom I have heard or read. These men, moved by some great impulse, some divine spirit, dealt tremendous blows upon what seemed to be the foundations of the social, moral or religious world. But only that which was weak or worthless or false was swept away. All that was strong and valuable and true remained. But what boat is that coming around the bend below us?”

50 Through Stress and Storm.

"That," answered Sarah, "is a little steamer used only for pleasure riding. It makes no regular trips, but carries parties from the city, ten miles below here, to any point on the river where it is navigable. It seems to have a picnic party aboard. They will probably land at a little grove two or three miles above here. As soon as the steamer goes past I'll pull into its wake, and the swell will rock the boat delightfully."

Just how it came about no one could afterward tell with certainty. But it so happened that as soon as the boat was fairly in the track of the steamer, one of the oars was in some way caught by a wave. This caused the boat to give a sudden and decided lurch to the right. As the occupants instinctively sprang to the left side of the boat, it overturned, throwing them into the water.

Sarah Callender, being near the bow, managed to grasp the boat, to which she clung, screaming with terror. Her companion was instantly swept away by the current, remained on the surface of the stream for some time, sank, rose again and floated for a short distance, then sank again just as Grover Hart, returning from a very brief visit to his patient, was driving close to the river bank, and took in the situation at a glance.

Without pausing to draw the reins, with a quick, sharp command to the horse, he sprang from the vehicle with one mighty bound, which carried him halfway down the slope. Another took him to the brink of the water. With the third he was far out in the stream, swimming with quick, powerful strokes which soon brought him to the spot where the helpless girl came to the surface for the last time. In an in-

52 Through Stress and Storm.

stant her arm was in the muscular grip of the hand of Grover Hart.

If instead of being in a state of semi-consciousness, every faculty of her mind had been alert, and had her whole being been dominated by the opposing emotions of intense, implacable hatred and devoted, self-forgetting love, she could not have flung herself upon him with more furious self-abandonment. Throwing her arms about him and thus pinioning his arms to his body, she dragged her would-be rescuer into the depths of the rushing river, causing him to swallow more water than he would have prescribed for a patient under any circumstances. With a supreme effort he lifted both himself and her to the top of the water, then, putting forth all his strength, he broke her grasp upon him, saying to himself the while: "Plague take the woman! Does she want to

drown me? I can't tell why God ever made women and fools, generally both;" his agitation driving grammar, logic and clearness of thought wholly from his mind.

Seizing her by her luxuriant, unbound hair, he raised her head well out of the water, threw his left arm around her waist, grasped her right arm in his left hand, and struck out for the shore. He was burdened with the weight of the now unconscious girl, and with that of his clothing also, of which it had not been possible for him to divest himself—not even of so much as one garment. But at the instant that he became conscious of this fact, it recalled to his mind that terrible day at Ball's Bluff when he swam from the shore to the island, carrying the arms and accoutrements of a private soldier, amid a rain of bullets. He knew that the powerful muscles which had upborne him then

54 Through Stress and Storm.

would not fail him now. In a very short time he had arrived so near the bank of the river that he could stand upright and carry his burden to the shore.

Meanwhile the captain of the steamer had put about as soon as possible, rescued Sarah Callender from her perilous position, and ordered that she should be taken ashore in one of the steamer's boats. There she arrived none the worse for the accident—saving the fright which she had suffered.

Just as she stepped ashore, the foremost of the people from the Callender residence, alarmed by her screams, came running to the bank, crying, exclaiming, and asking all manner of useless questions, as people are apt to do under such circumstances.

“Stand back, every one of you,” shouted Dr. Hart imperatively—“stand back, and stop talk-

ing. Off with your coat and spread it down here." This to Mr. Callender whom he addressed because he was nearest.

His order being obeyed, he threw his inanimate burden down upon the coat as roughly as if the girl had been a log of wood. She fell upon her face with her head toward the river.

Throwing off his coat, from which the water was running in streams, Dr. Hart seized the unconscious girl by the shoulders, shook her vigorously for a moment, then, as delicately as a woman could have done it, he changed the position of her apparently lifeless form so that she lay upon her side with her feet toward the river. Snatching a light shawl which Mrs. Callender was carrying on her arm, he pressed it gently but firmly over the clothing of his patient from her neck to her ankles. Then, flinging the shawl aside, he caught both the hands

56 Through Stress and Storm.

of the reclining girl in his own and began chafing them with all his might. At the same time he called out in quick, decided tones: "Two of you women take off her shoes and stockings, and rub her feet as hard as ever you can, with anything you can get hold of. A dry pocket handkerchief will do if you have nothing else. Rub them as if her life depended on your efforts, as indeed it may.

"One of you men run to the house and bring me a hand bellows, rubber bag, hot-water bottle—anything that I can inflate with air. Another go to my buggy and bring my medicine case, and be quick about it both of you!"

His orders were obeyed as promptly as they were given. Callender ran to the house, and Parker—who had come with the others—flew up the bank and returned almost instantly. The doctor opened his medicine case, took out a

small bottle of brandy and a graduate, and poured a teaspoonful of the spirits into the glass. Then, kneeling by the side of his patient, he carefully poured the liquid between her colorless lips, his face meanwhile betraying the keenest anxiety. There was heard a strangling cough, then a convulsive gasp, followed by the welcome sound of hoarse, rattling breathing. Gradually the color came back to the pallid face of the reclining girl, then her eyelids slowly unclosed, and she looked straight into the eyes of Dr. Hart, then closed her eyes again, wearily.

But at the instant that her eyes met his, Grover Hart dropped her hand and sprang to his feet. His face was as pale as hers had been, his form was trembling as with an ague. His agitation was so manifest that some of those who were looking on cried out with alarm. But their apprehensions were quieted in an in-

58 Through Stress and Storm.

stant, as something like a smile came to the doctor's white lips, and his cheery voice announced: "She's all right now! Two or three of you carry her up to the house and have her put to bed at once. Live?" this in reply to an anxious inquiry by the artist—"of course she'll live. Don't give her any spirits or anything else except a little nourishment, if she wants it. See that she lies in bed all day and that her feet and hands are kept warm. She will be as well as ever to-morrow. You need nothing more of me—" and seizing his coat from the ground he broke away from the group, ignoring an effort of the artist to have a word with him, and fairly ran up the bank, sprang into his buggy, and drove rapidly away.

But no sooner was he fairly on the way than he checked the pace of his horse and let his agitated thoughts take their course. "Heavens!"

he said to himself, "what a magnificent form that girl has! And then her face! Pretty? No; decidedly no! Beautiful? Yes; emphatically yes! No silkworm ever spun a thread so fine and soft and glossy as the filaments of her brown hair. Her forehead is quite too high and projecting to be pretty; but it reveals wonderful brain power. And who, since time began, ever had such eyes as hers? so large, so piercing, so liquid, so tender?

"One in search of a nose of Grecian type wouldn't look at hers twice; but the woman whose face it adorns has strength and decision of character, that is certain. Her mouth and her eyes are her only really beautiful features, and they are transcendently beautiful. And in her lips, and in her eyes also, sleep love and tenderness and passionate devotion for him who can awaken them.

60 Through Stress and Storm.

“And then her complexion! All the words which express softness and richness in color seem cold, weak and tame when applied to the color which nature has given to her face. I never saw such colors in nature or art save once. It was when the sun had gone down, and the crimson glow near the horizon was like the color of her lips, while above it the sky was radiantly white, as if the glories of heaven were shining through the firmament.

“If, when Moses came down from the Mountain of the Law, his face shone as that girl’s face did when she opened her eyes after her long faint, I don’t wonder that he had to put a veil over his face before the people could look upon it. I wonder who she is and where she lives?”

This thought aroused in his mind a feeling of irritation amounting almost to anger. “Why couldn’t she stay away and leave me alone?

And if she must fall into the water, why did she throw herself into my arms and nearly drown me when I was trying to save her? Her beauty and her clinging helplessness should have appealed to some one in her own station in life, not to one so much beneath her in everything as I am.

"No doubt she feels very condescendingly grateful to me. But then"—and here his mood became softer—"the feeling revealed by her eyes when they looked into mine was as kindly and trustful as though I were her equal in all things, instead of being the miserable, ignorant, poverty-stricken village doctor that I am."

His bitter meditations were ended by his arrival in front of the building in which he had his office.

He very slowly alighted from the buggy, tied his horse, ascended a flight of stars, trav-

62 Through Stress and Storm.

ersed a short, narrow, dark hall, entered his office and looked around on its dingy walls and meager, dilapidated furnishings.

“God pity me!” he said prayerfully.

IV.

Evelyn's Note.

IT was almost noon of the following day when, after a long drive in the country, Grover Hart found upon his office table a note addressed to himself. It had been brought by Parker, who had waited for Dr. Hart to return until he could wait no longer, and had then left the note and gone back to Callender's. The note was inclosed in an envelope which, in texture and style, was much finer than any that Grover Hart had ever before seen, and which bore the impress of an elaborately engraved monogram. These things he noted with a feeling which was neither joy, exultation nor pride, but which partook of each of these emotions.

And his heart beat very rapidly as he hastily but carefully opened the envelope. He found inclosed a dainty, perfumed note containing these words:

“DEAR DR. HART: Your directions in regard to the care and treatment which I should receive, were so scrupulously observed that not until this morning was I permitted to sit up, or talk with any one, or send a message to you, although I begged to be allowed to do so yesterday afternoon. I could not even learn your name until a few moments ago; so that all that I know of you is that to your heroic daring I owe my rescue from death.

“But I know that one who is capable of performing a deed so noble and brave as was yours of yesterday, does not need to be told that my appreciation of your heroism is equaled only by my gratitude to you, and that each is beyond the power of language to express.

“May I not hope to see you this afternoon and tell you, as well as I may be able to do so, how

grateful I am to you for saving my life at the risk of losing your own? I name a time so near in the future, because we shall be obliged to leave for home early to-morrow morning.

"My uncle and aunt, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Callender, join me in this request.

"Sincerely, EVELYN AATHERLY.

"June 17th."

Grover Hart read the note from beginning to end eagerly, his heart swelling with very happy emotions, until he came to the name subscribed to the missive. Then the light paper fell from his nerveless fingers, he dropped into the nearest chair, and covered his face with his hands.

His fate had overtaken him, and he knew it. With the reading of that name the eyes of his understanding were opened. He was like one who has for a long time been vainly trying to

66 Through Stress and Storm.

read an important message written in cipher, and who suddenly discovers the key.

Now he understood why his thoughts were troubled when he first read that name in his little tent in Virginia. It was plain to him now why, when the eyes of Evelyn Atherly first looked into his own, the feeling took possession of him that in some former time his whole being had responded to the most casual glance of those same lustrous eyes. Now he knew that while it might be that those mysterious thoughts and feelings were memories, they were surely prophecies. And he was as certain as he could have been, if a messenger from heaven had revealed it to him, that his whole future life would be influenced by the life of the girl who had written him that note, and that in some way her life would cloud his life with disappointment and sorrow.

He did not for a moment entertain the thought of loving Evelyn Atherly. Had such an idea occurred to him, he would have thrust it out of his mind as absurd. But it seemed to him as if an irresistible attraction was drawing him to her, and at the same time an inexplicable fear was impelling him to flee from her as far as he could go.

He drew his chair to the table and took up a pen to write a note excusing himself from calling. But he got no farther than the address. He had in fact no reasonable excuse for not complying with her request, and he would not invent one. There was really no way out of it. He must go. And he must walk. For he would present a most ridiculous appearance to Evelyn Atherly were he to use the ugly, shambling-gaited horse and rattle-trap buggy which conveyed him when he visited his few patients.

He took a good look at himself in a mirror and saw, not the frank, boyish face and clear, honest eyes there reflected, but his cheap, ready-made garments. How he wished that he were a woodchopper, that he might wear the picturesque apparel of the followers of that vocation. But no; he was a poor country doctor, and in the garb and guise of a poor country doctor he must go.

All the way he reproached himself for going, saying to himself, again and again: "Grover Hart, you are a fool; a stark, staring fool! You would better stay away without apology or excuse than to go. You will simply appear like a clown with your uneasy, awkward, country ways. She won't laugh at you—she is too well-bred for that—but she will be sorry for you for your own sake, and that will be worse than ridicule.

"And the very sight of her face will create in your heart longing without hope, and make all your future life miserable. And yet you are rushing into this net of your own spreading, because a lovely, kind-hearted girl is civil and courteous to you."

He stopped short almost in sight of Callender's house; stood for a moment, irresolutely, and then turned and walked rapidly back to his office. He had many times faced thundering batteries and volleys of musketry; but he could not, would not face what seemed to him to be his unhappy destiny.

"She may think me what she will," he said to himself, "a boor, a cad, a fool; I don't care. God knows my life is hard and bitter enough now through poverty, disappointed hopes and repressed ambition. She has no right to ask me to do that which will make it more hard and

70 Through Stress and Storm.

bitter. She is young, beautiful, fascinating. Does she think that because I am poor I am something less than human? Why didn't she write a note thanking me, if she felt bound to thank me, and stop at that?

"But she doubtless asked me to call, thinking that I would have sense enough to perceive that she wrote that part of the note as a matter of courtesy merely, and that I would write a polite acknowledgment and excuse and stay away. I don't see that I have any occasion to blame her for my own want of sense."

These meditations were brought to an end by his arrival at his office. There he found a boy impatiently awaiting his return.

"Be you the doctor?" was asked in a hurried, tremulous voice, ere the door was swung back far enough to allow Dr. Hart to enter his room.

"Yes, my boy. What can I do for you?"

"Aunt Maria wants you to come and see Uncle Ben, right away."

With some difficulty Grover Hart repressed an almost overmastering inclination to shout for very joy. Who "Uncle Ben" might be, and why he wanted a physician, were matters of no consequence. The important fact was that here, right to his hand, was a splendid excuse for not calling on Evelyn Atherly. Something of his exultation must have been revealed in his face or manner to the wondering boy, who made haste to say:

"He's hurted awfully, and wants you to come soon as you can."

"All right, my boy," said the doctor, recovering himself. "Who is your Uncle Ben?"

"Uncle Ben Gregor, sir. He lives out on the half-mile road."

72 Through Stress and Storm.

"How did he get hurt?" asked the doctor.

"He was working on the railroad, unloading rails; and one of them flew back and caught Uncle Ben's leg between the rail and the car."

"Whe-e-w!" ejaculated Dr. Hart, half speaking, half whistling. "That's bad. Why didn't they send for the company surgeon, Dr. Clifford?"

"They did; but he ain't to home, and won't be till day after to-morrow."

"I'll go at once, if you can carry a note to Mr. Callender's for me. I will have it ready in a minute and will give you a quarter for carrying it."

He sat down to his desk, and after a few minutes handed to the waiting lad a note reading thus:

"Dr. Hart deeply regrets that a very important professional engagement will prevent

his compliance with the kind and highly appreciated invitation of Miss Atherly, conveyed in her note of to-day.

"June 17th."

"That's sufficiently ceremonious, I hope, to show that I don't presume on her kindness," he said to himself, as he set about making a few hurried preparations for his visit to Ben Gregor.

The distance from his office to the home of his patient, though not great, was sufficient to give Grover Hart time to reflect on what he had done. And the more he thought upon it, the more dissatisfied he felt with himself for sending the note which was now on the way to Evelyn Atherly.

First looking cautiously around to see that no one was in sight, he took from his pocket the note written by Evelyn to him, handling it very carefully, as if it were something holy as

74 Through Stress and Storm.

well as precious. He scrutinized every letter of the superscription, then took the note out of the envelope and read it again. This he did very slowly, pondering every word as if his life depended on his comprehension of its full meaning. As he proceeded his feelings grew more and more tender, until he reached the end.

“That was a bright idea of mine,” he said to himself—“a very bright idea! A good-hearted, warm-hearted girl, a refined young lady, extends to me a courtesy, and I respond to it like a clown. I think it would puzzle me to tell why I was afraid to go. I paid myself a poor compliment in assuming that I could not call on a young lady and remain in her presence for a few minutes without exhibiting clownish awkwardness, or committing some breach of etiquette. If I can ever learn to think a great deal less about myself, and to be more anxious to

show good feeling, kindness and courtesy to my fellow-men, I shall not have occasion to blame myself so often as I do now."

The brief account given by the boy who brought Dr. Hart word of the accident to Ben Gregor, had not prepared the mind of the youthful surgeon for dealing with the situation in which he found his patient. On inquiry he learned, to his great surprise, that the accident had happened on the preceding day, instead of that morning, as he had supposed. The foreman of the working party—or "section boss" as he was called—instead of reporting the matter at once, as it was his duty to have done, had contented himself with directing that Gregor be carried home, and that Dr. Clifford, the local surgeon for the railroad company, be notified. He had assumed that Dr. Clifford would report the case and ask assistance.

76 Through Stress and Storm.

But it so chanced that before the messenger arrived, Dr. Clifford had gone to Cleveland, expecting to return in a few hours. So the messenger went his way, after leaving word with the doctor's office boy that the doctor was to go to Gregor's at once on his return.

Unfortunately Dr. Clifford was detained in the city not a few, but many, hours. So when Dr. Hart arrived at Gregor's house he found that Gregor had sustained a compound, comminuted fracture of the leg; had been lying in that condition, suffering excruciating pain, for about twenty-four hours, and was rapidly sinking.

Grover Hart knew that if the amputation of Gregor's leg should be delayed for another hour it would not be possible to save the patient's life. But there was not another surgeon within ten miles, and the nearest telegraph station

was nearly four miles away; so that the assistance of another surgeon could not be procured in any possible way, within three hours at the soonest.

And yet the canons of his profession forbade his attempt to perform alone an operation of that character. Should he undertake it and the patient die—as would most likely be the case—he would be ostracized by the medical fraternity, and his professional career come to an ignominious end. Should he perform the operation and his patient live, the irregularity of his act might be overlooked by his professional associates. But he would receive the reverse of appreciation or credit on account of his skill in performing the operation or the success attending it.

He could not afford to take such a risk. He could do no more than to say to those present

that he had been called too late, and to make the sufferer's way to death as free from pain as possible.

And yet it was hard to see a fellow-being die and make no effort to save him. Closely following this thought, there came into the mind of Grover Hart the words of one who was incomparable both as a healer and as a teacher: "Is it lawful to do good . . . or to do evil? to save life or to kill?" With the thought of these words the sturdy manhood of Grover Hart asserted itself, and he said to himself: "I'll not do it! Professional ethics to the winds! I'm not going to stand by and see one of God's suffering children die, if by any chance I may be able to save him. God made me a man before I became a surgeon, and with His help I'll make the attempt, come what will."

But how to manage it was a serious ques-

tion. Dr. Hart looked around on the few people present, to see if there was one on whom he could call for assistance in his delicate and difficult undertaking. The answer to his mental inquiry was not encouraging.

Ben Gregor's wife—a weak, nervous woman—was walking the floor, wringing her hands, and echoing her husband's moans and groans and cries. A young lady, a friend of hers, Grace Coburn, had been with her since early morning, to render such assistance as she could. But she was only a young, timid girl. Besides these there were only two present, John Wilson and Peter Flynn, men living in the immediate neighborhood; well-meaning souls, but awkward and clumsy.

But there was no time in which to find a competent person who could assist in a non-professional way. So, choosing Flynn as his helper,

80 Through Stress and Storm.

Dr. Hart flung open his instrument case and took from one of its compartments a bottle of chloroform, a sponge and an inhaler.

He saturated the sponge with the chloroform, fastened it in the inhaler, stepped quickly and noiselessly to the bedside, and, speaking in a low, encouraging voice, said to the well-nigh frantic sufferer: "Be patient half a minute, old fellow, and we'll stop that pain. I'm going to put you to sleep now, so that I can attend to your leg and not hurt you. Draw long, deep breaths, and you'll be asleep before you know it."

He carefully noted the pulsations of his patient's heart from time to time, until the anesthesia was complete. Then he turned to Flynn and said: "Take hold of this inhaler and keep it exactly where it is now. Don't let the mask slip, or you'll have trouble."

Then stepping to his instrument case Dr. Hart brought out an amputating knife, a saw, a scalpel, and a tourniquet. He then hastily made the necessary preparations for the operation, applied the tourniquet and tightened it sufficiently. Then, grasping the leg with his left hand, he drew the flesh up from the point at which he designed to make the incision, took the amputating knife in his right hand, and with a quick, deft movement thrust it through the leg on the under side, just missing the femur. With another dextrous stroke downward, at an angle of about forty-five degrees, he brought the knife entirely through the flesh, leaving a clean cut from the bone to the surface, completing the first movement of the operation. But at this important juncture, Flynn—who had been carefully watching the surgeon's movements instead of attending to his own

82 Through Stress and Storm.

part of the work—gave a half-cry, half-gasp, fainted away and fell heavily to the floor, carrying with him in his fall the inhaler which he had been holding to Gregor's nostrils.

For an instant Dr. Hart regarded Flynn with an expression in which amusement was mingled with contempt. Then turning to Wilson he said: "Come here and help me, Wilson! This ninny has fainted."

"Not for a thousand dollars," was the answer. "I want nothing to do with it."

"But I only want you to hold the inhaler over Gregor's face. You can do that, surely."

"I don't think that I could. And if I could, I don't want to be brought into this business in any way."

"But no harm can come to you, man, in any event. And Ben's life may depend on your doing this."

"I'll have nothing to do with it—I'll have nothing to do with it," was the only reply from Wilson, as he took himself out of the room and out of the house. He was followed by Flynn, who had recovered his senses and picked himself up just in time to hear the closing part of the colloquy between the doctor and Wilson.

Dr. Hart picked up the inhaler, replenished the chloroform in the sponge, held it to Gregor's nostrils for a few seconds, then left it on his face and, with outward calmness, walked into the next room. The situation was a desperate one. For a moment he felt a strong impulse to abandon his patient and everything else, and fly to some distant country.

But his former military training and experience led him, instinctively, to battle even against overwhelming odds. And his courage rose as he remembered how on one occasion he

had, alone and unaided, held back a large force of the enemy for more than half an hour, in order to give his regiment time to form. And the same pugnacious feeling he then had came to him now as he inwardly vowed that, whatever might come, he would fight this battle with adverse fortune to the bitter end. And his voice was clear and his tones mild and gentle as he said: "Miss Grace, will you please go out and find a man to help me. Ask the first one you see to come at once. Those cowardly knaves have gone, and I must have assistance without delay. Go as quickly as possible."

The girl started instantly to do as she had been ordered rather than asked. But before she reached the door she turned and said: "But why cannot I help you, doctor?"

"Are you a brave girl?" was the instant response, the questioner looking intently into the

eyes of the delicate girl before him as if he would there discern her temper and spirit. Before his keen gaze her eyes fell, and her cheek flushed as she answered: "I can be brave if it is necessary that I should be."

"Come with me, then," he said abruptly.

On entering the room, which seemed to him to be a veritable chamber of horrors, Grover Hart instinctively took the hand of Grace Coburn, and led her to the side of the bed where lay the subject still in a state of fortunate insensibility. Dr. Hart gave Grace a few necessary directions concerning the management of the inhaler, then turned to his work.

And there the timid, inexperienced girl stood, while the surgeon cut through the flesh on the anterior side of the femur, then with the scalpel ringed the femur below the wound he had made, dissected the periosteum from the bone

for a little space, and sawed through the bone.

Every second of the time required for the operation seemed to her an age, and every stroke of the knife or saw seemed to cut through her nerves, and still she kept her post of duty. Presently she heard the voice of Dr. Hart saying to her: "Is your courage sufficient to enable you to help me still more? I must ligate the arteries, and it is hardly possible for me to do it alone."

"I can do anything that is required of me," was the quiet answer. And, without a tremor, her hand held the forceps while the arteries were being ligated. The surgeon closed, dressed and bandaged the wound, and then said to his fair and delicate, but efficient assistant: "That will do; you can go now. You are a noble, brave girl; and may the Lord bless you."

She hurried from the room, threw herself into a chair, closed her eyes and would have fainted, had not her pride and her will triumphed over the weakness resulting from the nervous strain she had undergone.

And during all the rest of the afternoon, through the night, and until nearly noon of the following day, Dr. Hart remained at the bedside of his patient, fighting what appeared to be, for the first hour or so, a losing battle with death. Then for hour after hour the issue seemed wholly uncertain.

But toward noon of the day following the operation, the indications became so much more favorable that the doctor felt that it would be safe for him to leave his patient in the care of a trained nurse, who had been sent for and had arrived early in the morning. Grover Hart had driven but a short distance from Gregor's house,

88 Through Stress and Storm.

when he saw Grace Coburn walking by the side of the highway in the same direction that he was going. For the first time in his life he observed her fine figure and graceful carriage. And he was impressed by the fact that while she was not a beauty, nor even what would be termed pretty, she was possessed of such personal attractions that she was always spoken of by her rustic neighbors as "a right handsome girl."

He had known her, in a general way, from her girhood. When he was a boy of twelve years, and was accustomed to attend the spelling schools so common in those days, she was the champion of the country school which she attended, as he was of the school in the district where he lived. Many a contest he and she had engaged in to decide which of the two could "spell down" the other.

Later she had attended a seminary for young ladies for a few terms. She had thus become qualified to teach in the high school of a small town about ten miles away, and was now spending the vacation at home.

When she was only seventeen years of age, she had had what the neighbors termed "a love affair." A young man, with a pleasing address but devoid of a conscience, had, during a stay of a few weeks in the neighborhood, amused himself by making love to her, winning her love, and then breaking his engagement on the eve of his return to his home in the city.

Since then she had refused several offers of marriage from worthy young men, and was generally looked upon as one who had fully determined never to marry.

All this ran hastily through the mind of Grover Hart, ere he overtook Grace Coburn and

extended to her a cordial invitation to ride with him, which she as cordially accepted. Resuming the journey he asked her: "Have you just left Gregor's?"

"Oh, no," was the reply. "I left there early this morning; just as soon as the nurse arrived. I have been at home for several hours."

"How far do you go, may I ask?"

"I was on my way to the post office when you overtook me."

"To the post office! You don't mean to tell me that you were intending to walk four miles and back to-day!"

She laughed quietly.

"Is it possible Dr. Hart, that you do not know that, when teaching, I often walk to my home, a distance of more than ten miles, after school closes on Friday afternoon, and walk to school again on Mon-

day morning? A walk of eight miles is nothing for me, I assure you."

"Indeed, I did not know it. That explains the fact that you have such splendid control over your nerves. Heavens and earth! I never noticed that before."

Grace Coburn looked up in utter surprise at this irrelevant exclamation, and saw that the eyes of her companion were blazing with excitement and fixed on something in the distance instead of upon her face.

"What is it?" she cried, greatly agitated by his strange demeanor.

"It is the battlefield of Spottsylvania Court House!" he replied enthusiastically. "I never before in all my life saw a landscape so closely resembling another as this resembles the ground where our division fought, three years ago last month. Do you see that belt of woods yonder?

There were the earthworks of the enemy, crowded with men and bristling with cannon! I can almost see the red clay just thrown up by the spade, showing through the trees, as I saw it on the morning of May 12, 1864. Through that cornfield in the distance the brigade on our right moved. Right at the farther edge of that field in front of us, the men of our brigade halted and lay down, as we were commanded to do. There we remained for what seemed to us a long time, waiting for the order to charge on the works in our front. You can see how near to the enemy's line we were, and how close the range was for musketry as well as artillery.

"And there we lay in the midst of a thunder-storm which at any other time would have been terrific; the rain falling in torrents and turning the ground on which we were lying to soft mud; lightning flashing, thunder pealing;

every cannon and every musket in the enemy's line hurling missiles of death and destruction upon us. God of heaven! How the cannon flamed and crashed and roared! How the shells chattered and shrieked and howled! How the grapeshot hissed and the minie bullets wailed! It was as if the door of the bottomless pit had been thrown wide open and lost souls were escaping, pursued by demons.

"And all about us were blood, wounds, agony and death; silent, colorless faces upturned to the weeping skies, as if the voiceless lips and sightless eyes were asking the pitying heavens the reason why this should be; slender boys of tender years moaning and writhing in mortal agony; the earth soaked with blood as well as with rain; dismembered remains of human forms——"

He stopped abruptly as he felt a shudder agi-

tate the form of the gentle girl by his side; and he realized that he was talking to a delicate woman, and not to his comrades of the war.

Looking again at the face of Grace Coburn—for all this time the eyes of Grover Hart had been fixed on the reproduction of the field of blood he had been describing—he saw in her eyes an expression like that which must have kindled in the eyes of Desdemona while Othello was telling her of “the battles, sieges, fortunes,” which formed a part of the story of his life.

“Were you not terribly afraid?” Grace asked after a moment of silence.

“Afraid? I really cannot say that I was. The time was too awful to allow one to indulge the feeling of fear. And right in the midst of that terrible storm of death, a bird—a little song-sparrow—bewildered and paralyzed by the horrible din, fell to the ground at my side.

At first I thought that it was dead. But I picked it up and saw that it was unhurt. And in a moment it came to itself, and crept inside my blouse and nestled close to my heart. And then I knew that God had sent that sparrow to me, to tell me that He watched over it when it fell, and that He would take care of me. No, I don't believe that any of us were afraid. We were lifted out of ourselves by the appalling character of the scene through which we were passing.

"And I can remember that I kept saying to myself over and over again, and feeling the appropriateness of the words more and more with each repetition:

" 'Fear? A forgotten form.
Death? A dream of the eyes.
We were atoms in God's great storm
That roared through the angry skies.'

"Of course, I cannot speak with positiveness

96 Through Stress and Storm.

as to how others felt. But I judged their feelings partly by my own, in part from their demeanor and conduct. One example I shall never forget. The officer in command of the company next to mine on the left was Captain Mason, a noble young man, who left the university at the end of his junior year to go, with several of his classmates, to the war.

“In the midst of the terrible carnage I have been describing, I saw Captain Mason raise himself nearly upright, then fall upon his knees, cover his face with his hands, and burst into a torrent of weeping, crying out, ‘Oh, my poor boys! Oh, my poor boys!’ referring to those in his company who had just been killed or wounded.

“Almost immediately the order came to charge the earthworks in front of us. And then it was wonderful to see the transformation in

the appearance of Captain Mason. As he repeated the commands that the colonel gave, his voice rang like a bugle, his eyes blazed, and as he strode forward with his company his mien was fairly majestic.

"I was next to the color-guard on the left of our company, and Captain Mason kept near the right of the company under his command. Our colors went down no less than three times as we moved forward through that fire of hell; and every time they fell it was Captain Mason who snatched the standard from the hand of the dead or dying color-bearer and gave it into the hands of another of the guard.

"A little more than halfway up the slope Captain Mason fell dead, with a smile on his lip and a tear on his cheek; the smile for himself, the tear one of sympathy for his fallen comrades. You may think that his weeping

98 Through Stress and Storm.

was a sign of weakness; but I think that it was an evidence of genuine manliness. The most manly being that ever lived was Jesus of Nazareth; and He wept scalding tears when He stood at the tomb of His friend. And I tell you that there are times when the most manly thing a man can do is to sit down and cry like a child."

V.

The Doctor's Reply.

To a heart burdened with anxiety, "the cares that infest the day" are as nothing when compared with those that oppress the night. Through all the sleepless hours of the night which Dr. Hart devoted to the care of Ben Gregor, his thoughts were wholly given to the welfare of his patient. The reaction from the nervous tension under which he then worked, ought to have made restful slumber on the next night a matter of course.

But in reality the latter night was to him filled with greater disquiet than the former had been. Try as he might, he could not rid his mind of the thought that Evelyn Atherly had gone away; that she had gone without seeing

100 Through Stress and Storm.

him, or saying one word to him or hearing one word from his lips; that with her going the light had gone from the day, the stars from the night.

He had avoided meeting her when the opportunity was thrust upon him. But as soon as he had leisure for the thought that the opportunity could never be repeated, a feeling of loneliness, regret, and indefinable longing took possession of him, banishing sleep, and filling the night with dark visions of despair. So strong was this feeling that at times he found it difficult to restrain himself from arising from his bed and preparing to take an early morning train for Philadelphia.

But with the coming of the morning light, much of the gloom which had filled his mind was dispelled. And after calmly considering first, what could be done, and next what ought

to be done, to make amends for his ungracious conduct toward Miss Atherly, he wrote to her this letter:

“Z—, June 19th.

“DEAR MISS AATHERLY: An apology is due to you for the tone and tenor of my note of the 17th instant. I do not need to say that what I wrote you concerning a professional engagement was literally true. Just before writing the note, I received an urgent summons to visit a patient who had met with an accident so serious as to require immediate attention. I may add that had I not obeyed the summons without delay, the patient would not now be living.

“But the fact of which I told you in my note—and which I have again stated in this—was, as employed by me, one of those literal truths which are sometimes made to do service as virtual falsehoods. And while the task is harder than you can imagine, it is no more than your due that I should tell you the whole truth in

102 Through Stress and Storm.

regard to my nonacceptance of your invitation to call on you at Mr. Callender's.

"Before I saw you I had heard you spoken of, though not by name, by one with whom you have no acquaintance, but who—without intending to gossip—gave me a fairly good description of you. It needed no more than this and the brief moments during which I afterward saw you, to reveal to me that to be well born, wealthy, learned, refined, are with you matters of course. To me these gifts are aliens and strangers.

"I was born in poverty so deep and hopeless that I do not like even to think of it. My education—aside from that which is purely professional—has been such as I have been able to acquire, without instructors, during the infrequent intervals between hours of daily toil for daily bread. My associates have been those who were in circumstances like my own. My mother was a woman possessing that innate

delicacy of feeling, unselfishness, and kindness of heart which are the essence of refinement. But she died when I was so young that little memory of her remains to me.

"Add to what I have written that three years which would have been of incalculable value to me, could I have used them for myself, were devoted to the service of my country in the late war, and the whole of the story of my life is told.

"I do not mention my hopes and ambitions, my struggles against my environment—struggles which are like the beating of the wings of a bird against the bars of his cage—because these have no value in this explanation, except as they emphasize the difference between what I would like to be and what I am.

"From what I have written you may be able to apprehend—to some extent at least—what my feelings were on receiving your most gracious invitation to call on you. I felt as an

English collier might be supposed to feel were he to receive a command to dine with Queen Victoria.

"It is not necessary that I should tell you that my gratitude for the invitation was as unbounded as was your kindness in sending it. But I could not help fearing that were I to see you, though it should be for only a few minutes, your impressions of me would not be such as I could wish. And I wanted more than all else, that if you should ever think of me, your thoughts should be pleasant ones. And so (and this is the most humiliating part of my confession) I was not wholly sorry that I had to send my regrets.

"Having now made a full confession of all the secret offenses of my thoughts against you, may I ask that you will pardon me for writing a few words more? The expression of your gratitude for my act in taking you from the water, was very pleasant to me. But in truth you have no

reason to be at all grateful to me. I should be sorry indeed were you to think me capable of doing otherwise than as I did. It was no more than an act of common humanity, which would have been performed as readily had your friend, or even your servant, been exposed to the danger which menaced you. In fact, I had no idea who you were until after everything had been done which was done by me in your behalf; and your name was not disclosed to me until I read it at the end of your note.

“But I am more glad than I can tell you that you were brought safely through the accident which befell you. And I am glad also that God permitted me to be the instrument by which He delivered you from peril.

“You have no doubt forgotten the fact that during the last year of the war you sent a book to the soldiers at the front. It fell into my hands. I have it yet and count it one of my chief treasures.

"And ever since I first read your name inscribed in that little volume, I have not only hoped but believed that I should at some time meet you, and that our meeting would be of grave import to me. This belief was not the result of any course of reasoning on my part, but came to me intuitively. But as I had no way of learning anything concerning you—except your name—until within the past three days, I could no more foresee the time of our meeting than I could foresee the strange circumstances under which we met.

"I have thus ventured to tell you of that which has been the chief of the hopes which I have indulged for more than three years past. And I am sure that you will forgive me if I reveal to you the truth that the realization of my hope of seeing you has given me more happiness than had ever before come to me in my humble and uneventful life.

"It may be that I shall never look upon your

face again, nor hear your name spoken, nor know aught of your life from this time until the day of my death. But while I live the memory of your peerless beauty and of your unexampled kindness to me will be to me a never-failing source of happiness, as well as an inspiration to live a higher, nobler, better life.

"And though you should not care to hear from me or concerning me, you will sometimes think of me, not unkindly. And I am sure that at such times you will be glad to know that wherever I may be, or whatever may be my lot, the remembrance of the time when I was permitted to look upon your face and to be of service to you, is inspiring me to do my very best for my God, for my fellow-men and for myself.

Respectfully yours,

"GROVER HART."

The writing of this letter seemed to Grover Hart in some way to relieve his conscience as

well as his feelings. And so it was with a heart much less burdened with regret and anxiety that he set out for the home of Ben Gregor.

Somewhat to his surprise, and to his great joy, he found that his patient had been making decided progress in the right direction ever since he had last seen him. He found also that Gregor had gained so much in strength that he was able to receive a pastoral visit from the Rev. Ahira Lett, a clergyman residing in the village, one of those devout, earnest, simple souls, whose lives are a continual benediction to all with whom they come in contact.

After greeting the patient and his visitor, the doctor went through the indispensable ceremony of feeling the pulse, taking the temperature and looking at the tongue of the former. He then very naturally indulged in hearty congratula-

tions on the successful outcome of the operation. These congratulations, though addressed to Gregor, were really an expression of the joy felt by Dr. Hart because of his own success, as well as on account of the assured recovery of the patient.

"I suppose that's true, doctor," was the somewhat gloomy reply; "I don't doubt that I ought to be thankful that I'm alive. But it's pretty hard for a poor man like me to lose a leg when he has nothing but his work to depend on for a living, and when he has a family looking to him for their support."

"It is sad," interposed the clergyman sympathetically. "But it might have been very much worse. That you are now doing so well, after being so near death, is—as the doctor tells you—something that ought to make you feel glad. And I want to say that it ought to lead you

110 Through Stress and Storm.

to feel grateful also. God has not cast this trouble upon you merely to give you pain and sorrow. But He has sent it either for your own good or for the good of others. So I hope you won't repine because of your affliction, although neither you, nor I, nor any one can tell why it came."

"No doubt you are right, Parson Lett; no doubt you are right," was the meek reply. "But as I can't understand why it should be, it seems to me very hard. And to-day, while lying here, I've been thinking that I ought to have minded a warning I had a few days ago. I saw the new moon over my left shoulder; and that is always to me a sign of bad luck. Sometimes it has been sickness, sometimes loss of property; but something bad is sure to happen after that sign."

"I hope that you'll not let your belief in signs

run away with your good sense, Gregor," the clergyman replied. "Believe me, there is no reality in signs or omens such as you have mentioned. The doctor here knows all about astronomy. He could answer any question you might ask about the sun, moon or stars. And he will tell you that seeing the new moon over your left shoulder had nothing to do with your being hurt. Won't you, doctor?"

"I can say with truth that seeing the new moon over his left shoulder was not a sign that he would meet with misfortune. That it had no influence in occasioning the accident which happened to him is more than I dare assert. I do not know but that when Gregor was helping lift the rail from the hand-car, he saw that it was about to fly back and might injure him. At the same instant he may have thought of the ominous sign of disaster seen by him a few

days before. And this thought may have so occupied his mind that he failed to do that which he otherwise would have done for his own safety. His belief in the fulfillment of that which was to him a prophecy may have brought about the evil which he dimly feared."

"Then your view is that our superstitions may affect our lives in an indirect or accidental way, but not otherwise," said the minister.

"I could not give an affirmative answer to your question without qualifying it somewhat," was Hart's reply. "Our superstitions—as you term them—are usually indicative of the mental and moral qualities of those who harbor them. Those who believe in signs and omens generally—not always—belong to that class of people who attribute their good or ill fortune to heredity, or environment, or something of that sort. Now the more I examine the

subject, the more I am convinced that our lives, achievements and destiny depend more on our faith in God and in ourselves than on heredity, environment, or all other agencies acting singly or in combination.

"Jesus said—as you remember—'If ye have faith and doubt not . . . if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.' Now I have no right to assume that His words are to be understood in any other than their literal sense. He certainly meant that God has given to man a power which, through absolute, unlimited faith in God and in himself, will enable him so to command the material forces of this world that they will do for him whatsoever he wills.

"And we do not need to go to the Bible for illustrations of the truth that the man who has

114 Through Stress and Storm.

unbounded faith in God and in himself, can do greater works than the removing of a mountain and casting it into the sea. And it is not hard for me to believe that one's faith in the happening of a future event, either favorable or disastrous, might bring the event to pass."

"Do you mean to be understood, doctor, as asserting that the common superstitions about seeing the new moon over the left shoulder, failing to pick up a pin, and the like, have any scientific reason for their existence; or that belief in signs, either in the heavens or on the earth, could so influence one's mind or conduct as to change the course of one's life?"

"I can hardly answer your question directly, because it includes elements which, to my mind, are not similar. The superstitions you name have no rational basis, so far as my knowledge goes. But as regards belief in signs and omens,

more than one important battle has been lost or won because of the appearance of a comet, or the happening of an eclipse or an earthquake. You remember the sign which Constantine saw—or thought that he saw—and how it changed the course of the religious history of the world. Napoleon believed in his star of destiny, and won his empire through such belief. All these things were very unscientific, but they were, nevertheless, important factors in the making of history.

“And I am not ready to condemn as untrue everything which scientists declare to be unscientific. And this is because I have learned enough to know how little is certainly known in the world of science. Science is only a name for that which is known, and cannot properly be made to include either inference or conjecture.

“Now, so far as the facts are concerned, the

statements of one versed in any science may generally be accepted as correct. But his inferences or deductions are of little, if any, greater value than the inferences which any intelligent, educated man may draw from the facts. And yet I often see in the works of men who are eminent in some department of science, an assemblage of facts, inferences, conjectures and illogical deductions, all of which pass among learned as well as unlearned people as the teachings of science.

“As an illustration of the paucity of our knowledge of some of the problems of science, take the sunlight; a fact in nature as evident and as common as the air we breathe. The veriest hind knows that the rays of the sun are to this earth the source of light, heat and power. Beyond this what can the physicist tell us of the sun’s ray? Has he measured it or weighed

it? Can he explain the process by which it is evolved from the materials which compose the sun? Dare he assert that it is, unquestionably, the result of combustion and not the product of electrical energy? What is electricity? What is the distinction between heat, light and electricity? His ignorance in regard to all these matters would fill a much greater number of volumes than the sum of his knowledge.

"You referred—in terms of quite too high praise—to my studies in astronomy. It is true that I have given no little attention to that science. And I have not only availed myself of the wisdom of modern astronomers, but I have also studied the stars as the ancients studied them: by watching them in their several ways through the heavens, by carefully observing their light and color and the rhythm of their movements. And I have sought, by means of

eye, and mind, and heart, to penetrate the mysteries of their being. I have studied them with my soul as well as with my eyes. And I say to you that I dare not affirm that no one of the worlds in space has power to influence other worlds, save the power of gravitation.”

“Am I to understand, doctor,” asked the clergyman, “that you profess to be an agnostic, as regards the teachings of science, but that you do believe in astrology?”

“No, I do not believe in the astrology of the ancients. Nor does my belief in influences which may proceed from the stars, go much farther than the propounding of queries. Since this little world on which we live is inhabited by beings possessing spiritual power sufficient to control material forces, and to influence the lives and destinies of each other, may it not be that there are beings inhabiting other worlds,

who have spiritual power sufficient to influence our lives and destinies?

"And I must confess to you that no clear answer to this question has ever come to me. In the Bible there are some very significant expressions on that subject. In the book of Job, what is the meaning of the question, 'Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?' The explanation so generally given that it refers to the coming of spring, is decidedly weak. Again, what is meant by the statement, 'They fought from the heavens; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.' To say that these words refer to a storm of rain, with lightning and thunder, not only gives a forced and unnatural construction to the language, but also substitutes the commonplace for that which was evidently highly wonderful.

"I do not doubt that my questionings on this subject have been, in a great measure, the result of an experience I had a few years ago. It was during the closing days of the war, after the surrender of Lee and before the surrender of Johnston.

"I was sent out from our camp into the country several miles in search of forage. Returning, I lost my way and was compelled to remain in a dense forest all night. With a little grain which I had brought, I fed the horse I had been riding, tethered him securely, unrolled the single blanket which I happened to have with me, lay down, and very soon was asleep. The moon was at the full, the night clear and warm. You, Elder Lett, will readily recall the experience of Eliphaz the Temanite, as told by himself to Job. My experience was somewhat similar to that of Eliphaz. Unlike

him, I did not fear, nor tremble, nor did my hair stand on end. But I was overcome by a feeling of most profound awe. I was not asleep; nor did I awake or unclose my eyes. But I was conscious of my surroundings—the forest all about me, the moonbeams falling through the boughs, the night breeze gently stirring the leaves. All these things I realized as perfectly as I could if I had been awake. ‘Then a spirit passed before my face,’ and I was certain of its presence, although I could not see it, for in truth there was nothing to see. ‘It stood still but I could not discern the form thereof,’ for the very good reason that it had no form. ‘I heard a silent voice’ as plainly as I could hear your voice were you now to speak; but as the messenger had no organs of speech there was no audible sound. I did not hear the voice with my ears, but with my soul. And the message

was not in words, but was conveyed by means of spiritual impressions. But I know, with positive and certain knowledge, that it said to me, ‘Follow the impulses by which the Star of Love may lead you; but beware of the malign leading of Sirius.’

“The messenger departed; I awoke. And no amount of argument could ever convince me that what I have related was only a dream. I know that it was not a dream. Of course the impression which I have translated by the words ‘Star of Love,’ meant the planet Venus. And, however ridiculous the idea may seem to you, I have never since that night been able to free myself from the thought—which is more than an impression, though less, perhaps, than a conviction—that in the planet Venus there dwells a gentle spirit that seeks to lead me in happy ways; while in Sirius there lives an evil

spirit that would do me ill. And I never look at Venus but that its clear, mellow rays bring to my soul a feeling of joy and peace; but whenever I see Sirius its scintillations of white and blue are to me like the flashing of the eye of a demon!"

VI.

Evelyn's Response.

WHEN Grover Hart mailed the letter which he had written to Evelyn Atherly, he had no thought that she would reply to it in any way. But after a few days he began to query whether she might not write a few words to him. The more he thought of it, the more it seemed to be at least possible that she would acknowledge the receipt of his letter, and tell him that she forgave his courtesy to her.

The hope that she would do so led him to hurry to the post office whenever the mail from the East arrived, and wait anxiously during the time that it was being distributed. This he continued to do for about two weeks. At the end of that time, on a day that was there-

after a memorable one to Grover Hart, the postmaster handed him a letter, the envelope of which bore the monogram of Evelyn Atherly. The sight of the monogram set the heart of Grover Hart to beating wildly, and caused him to walk rapidly to his office, open the letter at once and eagerly read the contents, which were as follows:

“No. 78 Tenth Avenue,
“PHILADELPHIA, June 30, 18—.

“DEAR DR. HART: I cannot tell you how highly I appreciate the candor and frankness displayed in your letter to me. And I'm going to be equally candid and frank with you; both because it is my nature to be so, and because you deserve my confidence in return for yours.

“My feelings were hurt not a little by your cold and formal note declining my invitation to call on my uncle, aunt and cousin, as well as myself. It was a hard blow to my pride, be-

sides being what seemed to me a cruel repression of my feelings of gratitude toward you. I deserved to have my pride humbled, because I foolishly allowed myself to think that you would be glad and proud on account of having saved my life. And I was picturing to myself how we would all overwhelm you with our expressions of appreciation and gratitude.

"I did not once stop to consider the fact that I am not so important a personage in the estimation of others as I am in my own conceit. Nor did it once occur to me that what you had done in my behalf was an act of humanity, prompted by your own nobility of soul, and not at all because the one saved by your heroism chanced to be Evelyn Atherly.

"And I want to say to you—now that I am writing on that subject—that I can never agree with you in your estimate of the moral quality of your heroic deed. It is true that you would have done the same for any one; but that fact

does not diminish by one particle the bravery shown by you. And I shall always be as grateful to you as I could be if you had known me all your life, and had rescued me from death for my own sake, and not wholly because of your own noble impulses.

"And now I want to make a confession to you, which I fear will lead you to think that I was not worth saving, but ought to have been left to drown as being too stupid to be suffered to live.

"I remember as well as if it had occurred yesterday, the sending of the box to the soldiers, and my using all the money I had in buying a little book which I put in the box, thinking that some soldier would value it more than even good food or warm clothing.

"I was then a schoolgirl, only fifteen years old, and had never received a letter except from near relatives. So you can imagine how proud and happy I was when your letter came, telling

me that the book had been given to you, and how much you enjoyed reading it. My aunt, too, liked your letter almost as much as I did. She thought that you must be very sensible as well as manly to discern, as you did, the fact that the book was the gift of a young girl; and she thought also—as I did—that your writing to me was a kind and thoughtful act.

“I have your letter still and have read it many times; and yet when Mrs. Callender told me that my rescuer was Dr. Hart, and afterward spoke of your having been in the army, neither your name nor the fact of your military service led me to think that you might be the Grover Hart whose name was so well known to me. Did you ever before in all your life hear of such stupidity?

“But I have an excuse to offer which ought to mitigate—to some extent at least—the severity of your condemnation of me. In writing to me from the army you did not tell me your age,

and I inferred from the tone and tenor of your letter that you were thirty years old or more; and so I have always pictured you in my mind as a bearded veteran, and not as the smooth-faced boy you must have been then. And when my eyes first rested on you, how could I recognize in your pale, young face and slender form the bronzed visage and stalwart frame of the imaginary being to whom I had give your name?

"There was one matter referred to in your recent letter concerning which I wish to correct your impressions, however they may have been obtained. You wrote concerning me as if I were possessed of wealth and had a high social position in the city where I live. This conjecture is so far from being true that I might almost say that it is the reverse of true.

"I was left an orphan when a mere infant, so that the words 'father' and 'mother' are to me only the hallowed names by which I know

the noble man and lovely woman to whom I owe my existence, but of whom I have not the faintest remembrance. During all my life I have had a home with my uncle and aunt, and neither of them has ever given more care, or love, or sympathy to their own children than each of them has shown for me. So that my life has been the same, in all respects, that it would have been had I been their own child.

“But uncle is not rich, although we have a home which is as beautiful and pleasant as it could be made were he worth millions.

“And I am wholly candid in telling you that I am glad that my circumstances forbid my entrance into what is called ‘society.’ My uncle, my aunt and my cousins love me, and I love them; and I love the home which is to all intents mine as well as theirs. I am contented and happy, and have no lack of friends among my schoolmates, so that I have no social wants to be supplied.

"My chief desire is to show myself worthy of a small part of the care and love which uncle and aunt have given me during all the years of my life. And then I confess to a liking for scholarly pursuits, for the knowledge which I am obliged to obtain from books and teachers, while you are acquiring it in a much more pleasant way—from thought and observation.

"But this gossip about myself is in very bad taste, to say the least, and ought not to be tolerated by you for an instant.

"I am sure that I need not tell you that I shall be happy to hear from you whenever you may choose to write to me.

"Sincerely your friend,

"EVELYN AATHERLY."

VII.

Playing With Fire.

“THERE are no words in human speech more universally misapprehended by those who hear and use them, than the words ‘new’ and ‘old.’ Few, indeed, are willing to put forth the mental exertion necessary to enable them to study those words and learn their true meaning. Many ages ago there was a man who did this, and he declared the result to the world in the saying, ‘There is nothing new under the sun.’

“Relatively there are things new, and things that are old. Absolutely, nothing is new, nothing is old. It has been said that ‘history is philosophy teaching by example.’ Were the lessons which history teaches ever learned, it would cease to be true that ‘history repeats

itself.' History repeats itself because man is as old as the race, and the things which man did thousands of years ago he does to-day, and will do to-morrow. History repeats itself because man is new, and has had no experience by which he can profit.

"Adam and Eve are still living on this earth, and the child that was born into the world yesterday is older than the pyramids. Man neither knows nor considers that time is not a segment cut out of the great circle of eternity, but is a part of all eternity; that time never had a beginning nor will it ever have an end; and that the thing which has been, is now, and will be forever."

The truth stated in the foregoing extract from a letter written by Grover Hart to Evelyn Atherly accounts for the writing of the letter from which the words quoted are taken. In

entering upon and continuing a friendly correspondence, this young man and young woman, separated by many miles of space, and by impassable social barriers as well, and yet cultivating congenial thoughts, tastes and feelings, were but entering the way which has been traversed by the youth of every generation since the world began. But to Grover Hart and Evelyn Atherly it was as though this way had been prepared for them, and for them alone, from the foundation of the world.

Experience would have warned them of their danger, and would have counseled that the letter of June 30th end the correspondence. But experience was abiding with those to whom she could be of no possible assistance. If the truths which are taught by experience could be imparted beforehand—like the alphabet to a beginner—the teachings of experience would be

of priceless value to those whom she instructs. But the sad fact is that in life's great university an error committed at the first examination can never be corrected in this life. In such case all that experience can do for those who go to her for wisdom, is to tell them that they have failed; a fact of which they are already too well aware.

And so Grover Hart and Evelyn Atherly, like the simple-hearted creatures that they were, continued to write to each other with the perfect frankness which is possible only between a man and a woman who have each a high appreciation of the other and are yet heart-whole, and each without a thought of love for the other.

He wrote to her of the things which interested him most; of the delight which he felt in the study of the visible phenomena of nature;

of his observations of the flowers, the trees, the birds, the stars; of his thoughts, conclusions and beliefs concerning the problems presented for solution in the school of active life in which he was little more than a beginner; of himself, his profession, his hopes, ambitions and aspirations. In short, he revealed to her all that was in his mind and heart.

And she, on her part, was as unreserved in her confidence, and told him in her letters of her school life, her teachers, her studies, her love of and progress in music. Every letter, whether written by the one or by the other, drew them nearer each other in thought, interest and sympathy.

In none of the letters which passed between them was there a hint of love. But from the first he looked forward with eager longing to the time when a letter from her would be due;

and she anticipated the coming of his letters with anxious expectancy. And when by any chance a letter from either one of them to the other was delayed for even a day, that day was not like other days; and neither he nor she dreamed why this was so.

In one of her letters she quoted to him a half-playful, half-serious remark of her uncle in relation to their correspondence, to the effect that she would do well to "put a stop to that nonsense." On reading this Grover Hart awoke to the fact that the time might soon come when he could write no more to Evelyn nor receive letters from her.

This thought filled his mind with terrifying apprehensions. Up to that time he had not realized how thoroughly the interchange of thought, feeling, and sentiment between Evelyn and himself had become an essential part of his

life. But now he thought within himself that he could more easily comprehend what existence would be like were he to lose his sight, hearing and reason, than imagine what life would be to him were he to be deprived of the light of Evelyn's mind, of the soft, sweet voice which spoke to his soul in the chaste and beautiful language of her letters, of the aspirations which led his mind up the most lofty heights of thought and feeling because of the inspiring fact that she was interested in all that tended to his mental activity and growth.

But this condition of affairs could not go on forever, nor, indeed, much longer. She was interested in him—he reflected—just as she would be in some waif that she had rescued from the degradation of a homeless life in the streets. But other and more important matters would soon engross her attention. Then he,

with all that pertained to his life would insensibly pass out of her mind. She might recall him to her memory at infrequent intervals, but it would be only to wonder, in a vague and curious way, whether he still lived and how he fared.

Discovering that this thought was to him a painful one, Grover Hart decided to analyze his feelings toward Evelyn Atherly. He would determine whether his regard for her was a passionless, mental appreciation of the noble qualities of her mind, or a heart recognition of her beauty, her intellectual worth, the womanly kindness and tenderness of her nature.

The result was far from reassuring. And then he called to his aid the self-control on which he prided himself not a little. He inwardly vowed that he would not be so weak or foolish as to indulge a warmer feeling for Evelyn than mere friendship.

"It would be a most ungrateful return for her kindness," he said to himself, "if I were to fall in love with her and thus alienate her forever. How disgusted she would be did she know that I even dared to think of such a thing. She is as far above me as the stars are distant from the earth. A Hottentot might with less presumption fall in love with the empress of France than I would have were I to fall in love with Evelyn."

And so Grover Hart went on writing letters to Evelyn Atherly, and receiving letters from her, while month after month went by, until a year and several months had elapsed since his first letter to her. It then became necessary that he should go to Philadelphia to look after some matters of business.

Before starting he debated with himself whether, while in the city, he should call on

Evelyn Atherly. She had more than once expressed a wish to see him should he visit Philadelphia, and in this he knew that she was sincere.

But an important question with him was whether it would be wise for him to see her. Were he to do so he feared that his peace of mind would be gone forever. If he did not call on her her feelings would be wounded and she might be so deeply offended as to break off all communication with him.

He finally concluded that the only way by which he could escape from this dilemma would be to conceal from Evelyn the fact of his visit to the city. This seemed to him to be a cowardly way by which to avoid meeting her, but there was no alternative which he dared adopt.

The business which took Grover Hart to

Philadelphia was soon dispatched. But after his business was concluded he found that it would be several hours before the leaving time of the train on which he was to return home. Casting about in his mind for ways in which to occupy the time, he remembered that Dr. French, one of his former classmates at a medical school, had been practicing his profession in Philadelphia for a year or more, and was then occupying an office but a few blocks away.

He found his friend just leaving his office to make the rounds in a hospital with which he was connected as one of the day surgeons.

"I'm the luckiest dog alive, old man," said French, after the first warm greetings and inquiries were over.

"I'm lucky to see you and have a chance to talk with you. And I'm lucky also to have you call just when I can entertain you better

than I could at any other time. I'm just starting for the hospital. Come along with me and we'll talk over old times on the way. And when we get there I can show you some of the most beautiful cases of fractured bones, fearful injuries, and deadly diseases you ever set your eyes on! Come on, and we'll have a better time this afternoon than either of us has had since we used to almost worry the life out of poor old Professor Gray!"

It was mid-afternoon when they entered the hospital. But so interested was Grover Hart in Dr. French's "beautiful cases" that he took no note of time until the round was well-nigh completed. Then he noticed that the autumn afternoon was fast waning and the twilight shadows beginning to fall.

"This is the last ward," said French, as they entered one which at first seemed to be unoccu-

pied. "It contains but one patient to-day; a woman who was knocked down and run over by a drunken wretch driving a carriage."

On one of the beds in a distant part of the room, Dr. Hart saw a young woman, with face and arms heavily bandaged. A nurse was standing near, and at the side of the bed, with her back toward him, a girl was kneeling, holding the hand of the injured woman.

Dr. French walked lightly to the farther side of the bed, took one of the patient's hands in his, noted her pulse and respiration, and asked a question or two of the nurse. Then he said, quietly: "She's all right now. There are no signs of internal injury. She'll be able to leave here in a few days. I'm ready to go now, Hart."

At the mention of that name the kneeling girl sprang to her feet, turned about like a flash

and gazed intently at Grover Hart. And even the agitation which seized upon him did not prevent him from noting that the look which she fixed on his face was first of eager inquiry, then of amazement, then of quiet joy. All this went through his mind with the rapidity of thought as he realized that the girl standing before him was Evelyn Atherly!

Without waiting to ascertain whether he was awake or only dreaming a very familiar dream, Grover Hart sprang forward, exclaiming: "Evelyn Atherly! Of all the strange things in this strange world, the most wonderful is my meeting you here! How do you do? You can imagine how glad I am to see you, when I tell you that I am a thousand times more glad than surprised."

"I think that I have reason to be surprised as well as you," she replied. "I certainly never

anticipated meeting you in a hospital—and in the dark," she added, mischievously.

As if reminded of her duty by this suggestion, the nurse stepped softly behind Dr. Hart and lighted the gas. The shade was so arranged that the light could not fall on the face of the patient, but fell in subdued softness on the radiant face of Evelyn Atherly, bringing into distinct outline her finely cut, harmonious features, and revealing the exquisite, healthful clearness of her complexion in a way that any woman might envy.

Utterly unconscious of all this was she, but she could not long remain unaware of the fact that the eyes of Grover Hart were fixed on her face with a look of admiration so intense that she involuntarily raised her hand to her face as if to shield it from the ardor of his gaze. At the same time her color deepened so perceptibly

that Grover Hart could not help observing it, and—guessing the cause—he in turn felt not a little embarrassed because of that which he feared was a piece of downright rudeness on his part. And his embarrassment was in no way diminished by his suddenly becoming conscious of the fact that for a full half minute he had been stupidly staring at Evelyn and had said nothing to her following her response to his greeting. For this reason his next words to her seemed to be spoken with more eagerness than the nature of the inquiry would seem to require.

"But how do you happen to be here?" he asked.

"I think that I have more reason to ask that question of you," replied Evelyn. "But as you were the first to ask the question, I will answer it. Poor Mary, here, our housemaid, met

148 Through Stress and Storm.

with a frightful accident this morning, and was brought here before it was learned who she was. As soon as we heard of it I came here, and have been with her all day. I am so glad that the surgeon says that she is out of danger."

At this point Dr. French, with a discreetness which would have done credit to an older man, interposed, saying, "I must go now, Hart. Sorry I can't ask you to go with me, but I've some patients to visit, and after that must go and dine with some friends. Could have secured an invitation for you if I had known of your coming in time. If you should make up your mind to stay a day or two more, come and see me at two, to-morrow. If not, good-by to you, and let me see you whenever you come to the city."

Shaking hands with Dr. Hart and bowing respectfully to Evelyn Atherly, he left the building. In going he took with him—as it

seemed to Grover Hart—all the wits the latter had ever possessed. Try as he might to retain his self-possession and carry on the conversation with Evelyn, he could not, for his life, think of any topic which would be an appropriate one for discussion under the circumstances.

So in sheer desperation, he began to recount the objects of interest which he had seen while in the city, describing each one as minutely as his limited observation would allow. But presently an amused expression on the face of his fair auditor caused him to remember that he was talking to one who had lived in the city all her life, and was far better acquainted with the things he was describing than he could possibly be. This thought so disconcerted him that his talk became lame and disconnected to such an extent that there was danger that it would end abruptly in hopeless confusion.

150 Through Stress and Storm.

With ready tact Evelyn came to his relief by saying, "But I have been so bewildered by meeting you in this strange and unexpected way, that I have failed to ask when you came."

"Only this morning?" was his reply.

"And how long do you stay, may I ask?" was her next inquiry.

"My stay must be very short indeed," he answered. "I have planned to start for home on the evening train."

"But you surely were not intending to return home without seeing me?" she said, in a tone which indicated no little surprise.

"I did not expect to have time—that is—" he said, and then stopped short, realizing that he was telling what seemed to him to be a despicable falsehood in order to cover his more despicable meanness in trying to come to the city without her knowledge, and then sneak away with-

but seeing her. Her eyes fell, and the flush which came over her face seemed to Grover Hart to betoken much more of righteous indignation than sorrow. She quickly raised her eyes again and said quietly: "I must go home now. It is growing late. I hope you have enjoyed your visit in the city."

She was about to go when he stopped her by saying, in a tone such as he would have used in giving a military command: "Wait a minute! I will go with you. I want to talk with you."

"I don't wish to trouble you," she responded icily. "It is only a little way home and I can call a carriage at the next corner."

He came closer to her; so close that his next words were spoken in a low voice, but in that imperious tone which most women like to hear from the lips of one who is a leader and commander among men: "You could call a car-

152 Through Stress and Storm.

riage, but you will not, because I want you to walk with me so that I can talk with you."

Before they were fairly outside the building Grover Hart began talking to Evelyn Atherly in low tones and in a somewhat hurried manner, the cadence of his voice indicating that he was struggling with some powerful emotion and holding it back by the exercise of all the strength of will that he possessed.

"I'm going to give up the struggle," he said. "For months and years I have been contending against God and all the angels in heaven, and against Satan and all the powers of darkness. But the contest is too unequal, and I must yield. Nothing remains to me now but to tell you my story, receive my sentence of condemnation from you, and go back to the dreary, miserable life that was mine before I knew you.

"When the book which you sent to the sol-

diers fell into my hands, I was powerfully impressed and attracted by your name. I thought it a beautiful name, and somehow I seemed to know it as well then as I do now. This troubled me, and I tried to dismiss the feeling, but could not.

"For nearly three years I cherished your name, knowing nothing of you except that there lived a girl bearing that name. Then I saw you struggling in the water. Why it chanced to be myself and not some one else passing along that lonely road at that particular moment, perhaps God knows; I don't.

"But even God doesn't know what it was to me to take your magnificent form in my arms, as I had to in order to save you; to feel your silken hair trailing against my face while I was swimming to the shore; to take your delicate hand in mine in seeking to discover whether

you still lived; to see your lustrous eyes unclose and look straight into mine, filling my whole soul with the glory of heaven. I could not endure it. I ran away.

“You thought me boorish in not calling on you when you asked me to do so; so I was. But I dared not do it. I was in an agony of longing to see you, but I put down that feeling with the strength of a will such as I alone possess. God is my witness that until we began writing to each other I did not love you.”

He saw her eyes—which had been fixed on his face with a look of troubled, anxious inquiry—drop in confusion, while her face paled and a shiver went over her frame, but he went on persistently:

“But when you wrote to me and revealed in your letters the nobility of your mind and the beauty of your character; when every expres-

sion of your thoughts and feelings fed my mind and heart as with manna from heaven; when I could feel my mind enlarge and my thoughts grow purer day by day because of the influence of your mind and heart upon mine; when, in process of time, this influence became as necessary to the growth of my mind and the development of my character as the air about me was indispensable to my physical life, how was it possible for me not to love you?

“But I knew how hopeless my love must be. And I knew that were I to see you I should lose your friendship by revealing, in some way, my love.

“And so I resolved not to see you.

“And again I am brought into your presence, without my seeking. And I am not only compelled to look on the exquisite beauty of your face, but also to hear the tones of your sweet

voice and look into the depths of your soul through your eyes.

"But when, under these conditions, it is expected of me that I will go away and leave you, and say nothing of all that is in my heart, I can only protest that no being in heaven or on earth has the right to require this of me. I am not a stock, nor a stone, nor a graven image, but a man; a man with an active, discriminating mind, with a pure, true, warm heart. And if I should be condemned to suffer in eternal torment for it, I must speak and tell you that I love you!"

She had been walking apart from him, her eyes cast down, her cheek flushing and paling by turns. But now, without lifting her eyes, she came closer to him, and slipped her hand within his arm as he kept on: "I love you with every power and attribute of my being. I love

you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul. To me you are the dearest, noblest, most beautiful girl that God ever made.

"God knows I have tried not to love you,"—and there were tears in his eyes as well as in his voice when he said this—"but it has been of no avail. I know that you will despise me for my presumption, perhaps hate me. I know that you will never want to see me again, nor ever hear from me——"

"Hush!" she said softly. "You are doing me a cruel wrong, as well as wronging yourself in what you are saying. Even if I did not love you, could I be unkind to you because you love me? Why shouldn't you love me if you think that I am worthy of your love? I am glad that you love me! I have admired you from the hour when I first saw you, though I long ago came to think as you did of your act

158 Through Stress and Storm.

in saving my life. You are entitled to no credit for it, because your brave, manly, noble nature would not permit you to do otherwise than as you did.

“But I could not help admiring you for your strength, your bravery, your nobility. And when you wrote to me I cared more for your letters than I have ever told you. Through them I have come to know you so well, to sympathize with you in your struggle upward from ignorance and obscurity, to appreciate more and more how noble, brave and true you are, until I have become proud of you.

“And now that you have told me of your love for me, I am free to say to you, without hesitation or shame, that which my heart has revealed to me within the last half hour—that I love you as truly, as fondly, as tenderly as you love me.

"But why do you persist in thinking that there is some insuperable social barrier between us? There is nothing of the kind. You are more wise, more gifted, more learned than I. And I told you years ago of the fact that I am as poor as you can possibly be; that I am dependent on my uncle and aunt for everything. But if I possessed the wealth of the world I would abandon it all—if it were necessary—and go with you to the ends of the earth.

"But there will be no need that I should even offend my friends on your account. It may be that my uncle will be prejudiced against you. Indeed I fear that such is his feeling already. But you will overcome it in time; and if I am worth having I am worth waiting for. But you must be manly and straightforward with uncle, and if you want leave to call on me you should see him and tell him so."

While she was speaking they passed through the area gate in front of her home. Pausing for a moment, she withdrew her hand from her lover's arm, turned and faced him, saying piquantly: "You have domineered over me and ordered me around ever since I have known you. Now it is my turn to lay some commands on you. You are not to leave this city to-night; and you are to dine with us at six to-morrow. I will take all the responsibility for the invitation. And you are to come early in the afternoon to see me. Good-night!"

And with these words she flew up the steps and went into the house, leaving Grover Hart too bewildered to realize aught save the fact that the heavens and the earth had passed away, and lo! there was a new heaven and a new earth!

VIII.

A Provisional Acceptance.

IN his war-time experiences, Grover Hart had occasion, more than once, to realize the shrinking dread which comes even to the bravest of the brave when the storm of battle is about to break. But he was compelled to admit to himself that never before had he felt such agitation as seized upon him during the moment or two which elapsed while he was awaiting a response to the ringing of the door-bell by him at No. 78 Tenth Avenue.

To his surprise and joy Evelyn herself appeared, and at once conducted him into the presence of her aunt and cousin. Their unaffected, cordial greeting put him at ease with himself and with them at once. And as for

Evelyn, he could hardly persuade himself that he had never spoken to her before the preceding day!

So rapidly flew the moments that when Mr. Atherly and dinner were announced, almost simultaneously, Grover Hart could not refrain from laughing inwardly when he remembered how he had pictured to himself the terrors of that afternoon. He had imagined the aunt as grimly eying him like some stern old dowager, and treating him with scant courtesy and ill-concealed disdain; her daughter studiously and ceremoniously polite, and poor Evelyn, flushed and mortified, doing her best to make his call as free from embarrassment as it could be under the circumstances.

Instead of this he had enjoyed the society of three delightful entertainers, each of whom seemed unconsciously striving to outdo the

others in genuine friendliness, Evelyn eclipsing the rest only because she was the dearest and noblest girl on earth.

At dinner he found Mr. Atherly to be a gentleman having a remarkable amount of general information, and possessing also that inbred and dignified courtesy and tact which became him, not like his well-fitting garments, but, like his pleasant voice and kindly eye, seemed a part of himself.

It was very hard for Grover Hart to ask such a man for an interview, with such a purpose as he had in mind. But he reflected that it would be much harder not to do so.

In the few romances which Grover Hart had read, the father, or guardian, on being asked for the hand of the fair maiden, had fallen into a rage, overwhelmed the presumptuous suitor with reproaches, and driven him from the

house, with a stern injunction never to enter its doors again. He therefore anticipated nothing less than objections and opposition to his request, at the best.

But despite his fears he managed to disclose to Mr. Atherly, in a frank and straightforward way, his love for Evelyn and his desire to obtain her consent to marry him, and asked permission to address her with that intent. Mr. Atherly, while expressing some natural surprise at the request, replied to it in a kind and fatherly way. He said to the young man, frankly, that he was not altogether such a one as he—as Evelyn's guardian—would have chosen for a husband for Evelyn. Still he would not oppose his wishes if Evelyn should be willing to marry him and if, on inquiry, nothing derogatory to his character should be disclosed.

While going down the stairway, after this

interview, Grover Hart paused on one of the steps long enough to thrust the point of a pin into his arm. He knew that one who is dreaming cannot, in his dreams, inflict pain on himself. He may dream of gashing his flesh with a knife, of being pierced by a bullet; he may be greatly terrified thereat, but the sensation of pain is absent.

"I feel pain in my arm," said Grover Hart to himself, "therefore I am awake. But everything that has happened to me during the past twenty-four hours almost passes belief. I have always heard that 'the course of true love never did run smooth.' But I love Evelyn as no mortal man ever before loved mortal woman. And I know that she loves me. And yet not only is the course of our true love running with the utmost smoothness, but it would seem that by some unseen power every valley

is being exalted and every mountain brought low, the crooked made straight and the rough places smooth for the course of our love."

He found Evelyn alone and awaiting, with manifest anxiety, his dismissal from the conference with her uncle. As he entered the room she arose and came forward to meet him. As she did so the look of anxiety on her face gave way to an arch smile as she said: "I've no doubt that you are a very skillful diplomat; the success of your mission shows that. But you lack one important aid in diplomacy; your face always discloses what is going on in your mind. I have no need to ask you the result of your talk with uncle; your face reveals it."

"But you don't know what he said to me," said Hart jubilantly, "and I want to tell you. He gave me permission to ask you for your hand. Will you give it to me?"

Whether that question was ever answered in words, and if it was what the words were, the parties to the conversation were never afterward able to remember. Indeed they were conscious of little else than the fact that they were supremely happy, too happy to take note of even the flight of time, until the clear chime of the French clock on the mantel struck the hour of ten. This served to remind Grover Hart that if he would not forfeit the fairly good opinion in which he seemed to be held by Evelyn's kindred he must take his departure at once.

Taking a formal though courteous leave of all the members of the family—including Evelyn—he retired from their presence into the hall, put on his overcoat and was reaching for his hat, when Evelyn appeared. Coming close to him she placed one of her soft, white hands upon his shoulder, lifted her tear-suffused eyes

to his for an instant, then hid her face on his arm so that her tears could flow unrestrained and unseen.

With delicate gentleness did Grover Hart encircle her waist with his strong arm, saying soothingly: "Don't cry, little girl! I'm coming again before very long, you know. And then I shall write to you just as soon as I reach home. And we're going to be very, very happy, aren't we?"

Then tenderly lifting her tear-wet face, he bowed his head lower and lower until his lips met hers in a kiss of pure, true, abiding love. The strength and vigor of his mind, the warmth and tenderness of his heart, the passionate longing of his soul for her, were all revealed in the pressure of his lips on hers.

And as the rays of the summer sun cause the crimson heart of the rosebud to burst into

bloom, so the fervor of his kiss warmed into activity the dormant tenderness of her nature —a nature made up “of spirit, fire, and dew.” And in her answering kiss she pledged to him all her life, mind, heart, soul and being.

Whatever the future might bring to either Grover Hart or Evelyn Atherly, their lives could never again be as they had been. For in the magnetic thrill of their kiss of betrothal a part of the soul life of each had gone into the spiritual life-currents of the other, there to abide as long as they should exist, whether in time or in eternity.

The train on which Grover Hart had planned to leave the city was scheduled to start from the — Street station at 5:30 o'clock in the morning. Had the hour been four o'clock it would have been no hardship for him to be ready in time; for not once during the night

did he fall asleep. His happiness was too intense, too ecstatic to lose one moment from its enjoyment.

Long before daybreak he left the hotel, to the wonderment of the clerk, who assured him that it would be a full hour before the train would leave, and he could easily walk to the station in twenty minutes.

Instead of going directly to the station, Grover Hart took his way up Tenth Avenue. On the way he met several stolid-looking policemen, more than one of whom eyed him suspiciously. One of them went so far as to follow him for more than a block.

"This is pleasant," said Grover Hart to himself ironically. "This is exceedingly pleasant! Here am I, an innocent young man from the country, on my way to bid an unknown, unheard adieu to my lady-love; and yet I'm in

imminent danger of being arrested as a suspicious character. How on earth could I explain my movements, either at the station house or in the police court?"

Having arrived in front of the Atherly residence, his eyes sought the window of the room which he thought to be Evelyn's. For a few moments he stood, pouring forth from the depths of his heart unutterable thoughts and feelings of love and tenderness toward the vision of loneliness which his imagination pictured to him as concealed within the hallowed walls of Evelyn's sleeping apartment.

From the contemplation of this vision he suffered his thoughts as well as his eyes to rove for a brief time through the depths of the heavens above and around him. The darkness of a clear, warm, October night was just beginning to pale before the coming of a bright

October day. In the north the Great Bear was slowly pacing his endless journey around Polaris; westward the red shield of Mars was hanging low in the sapphire sky; in the south flamed the sword of Orion; while in the east, upon the very edge of the advancing dawn, Venus was shining with pure, white radiance, like a pearl on the brow of the morning.

To Grover Hart it seemed that he was at that moment occupying the most desirable place in the universe and in time, from which to view this splendid panorama of the starry worlds. He was near the mansion which enclosed and guarded the idol of his soul in her sweet and peaceful slumbers. He was in the morning of life; and his life was already crowned and glorified by the love of Evelyn Atherly; while his heart was just then overflowing with the rapture of his love for her. "God of the heavens! I

thank Thee for giving to me my Evelyn," he said fervently.

The train on which Grover Hart took passage from the city was an accommodation train, which stopped at every station, and moved at so slow a rate that one in haste would have been annoyed to the point of exasperation. But Grover Hart was not in haste. Indeed he experienced a feeling of regret that he was being carried farther and farther from Evelyn.

His thoughts were of her continually. He tried to interest himself in a book, but could not. He bought a morning paper and looked through its columns to see if by chance there should be a reference to Evelyn's uncle or to her uncle's family. And then he smiled at the absurdity of his thought that possibly he might see Evelyn's name in print.

He consulted a time-table to see at what hour

his train would arrive at Pittsburg. He was to leave the train there in order to collect some money which was due him from a resident of that city. The amount was not large; but he would need all the money due him if he were to have Evelyn to support—and then for an instant thought ceased, and his mind seemed to become a blank, because of a suggestion contained in the idea which had just occurred to him.

And it was from a feeling of bewilderment and positive terror that he brought his mind to this thought—"If I am to have Evelyn to support."

Of course he was to have Evelyn to support, as well as to love, protect and cherish. He and she were to be married, and when they were married he must support her. But how? And his terror increased as he realized that

A Provisional Acceptance. 175

this was a subject which he had never before really considered for a moment.

In all his acquaintance with Evelyn Atherly, the thought of marrying her had never been allowed a lodgment in his mind. He had refused to think of such an event as possible. He had gone to the city with no intention of seeing her. He had been thrown into her society without his will. He had declared his love for her because he could not help doing so. And in all that had followed, he had been so anxious to win and to retain her love and to obtain her consent to marry him that he had never once reflected that marriage with Evelyn would involve the question of shelter, food and raiment for her.

But that question was confronting him now and must be met. Nervously taking from his pocket a memorandum book containing his cash

account for the preceding year, he hastily added the amounts received each month. It was quickly done. And the sum total was represented by only three figures!

He replaced the book in his pocket mechanically. A chill like that of death was creeping over his frame, although the air seemed to be stifling him with its heat. He arose and groped his way out of the coach to the platform. For a moment he meditated flinging himself from the train and being ground into fragments by the wheels.

But the thought came to him that this would be a sin against God, and—still worse—it would break Evelyn's heart. He must spare Evelyn's feelings, whatever might be the cost to himself. He would go back into the coach, sit down and think the matter over. He would be calm and brave.

He would think of Evelyn first. How well he remembered everything pertaining to her which fell under his observation during all the time he was in her presence. How marvelously beautiful she was! How tasteful, yet how rich, her apparel! And her home! How elegant it was in all its appointments, yet wholly devoid of everything which could have the appearance of an ostentatious display of wealth. It had impressed him as being in appearance just what it was in fact—an abiding place of refinement, culture, ease, affluence.

Then he turned his thoughts to the village in which he lived, as it had appeared to him on the day when he first saw Evelyn. How pitifully small and mean it seemed, with its unpaved streets, its low, wooden buildings, and the general air of newness and roughness which pervaded it.

He thought of the cheap boarding-house where he took his meals, and of those with whom he was there daily brought in contact; good, honest, intelligent people, but not at all noted for their learning or refinement. He thought of his small, dingy office, and of the little room adjoining it in which he slept, because his poverty forbade his occupying more commodious lodgings.

And it was into surroundings such as these that he must take Evelyn, after their marriage.

What would be the inevitable result? However much she might love him, and, loving him find happiness in his society; however free she might keep herself for a time from the influences of her environment; these must, in a little while, drag her down to a life of poverty and wretchedness, dim the luster of her glorious

eyes, rob her cheek of its bloom and still the happy song upon her lips.

And he shuddered to think what she must become—even in his loving eyes—when the matchless symmetry of her divinely-molded form should be hidden by coarse garments; her delicate, white hands grown hard and brown; the lilies and roses now blooming on her fair face faded and gone forever.

And then there came into his mind a remembrance that made his soul fairly cringe with an agony of shame. He recalled the fact that Evelyn's uncle had asked him, pointedly, the extent of his income. He had thought it a strange, almost impertinent question. He did not at the time comprehend why it was asked, but thought that it was to ascertain his standing and reputation as a physician.

And he had not answered with entire frank-

ness. He had given figures which represented his expected rather than his actual income. He had not intended to deceive, but he had unwittingly deceived Evelyn's guardian. He had meant to tell the truth; but he, Grover Hart, who prided himself on his truthfulness, had really told a falsehood.

But with this mortifying remembrance there was a gleam of hope. Shortly before leaving home, he had learned that Dr. Clifford had sent in his resignation as local surgeon of the —— Railway Co. He—Dr. Hart—had applied for the place thus left vacant, and had been assured by the local agent of the company that he would, without doubt, be appointed. The amount which he would receive from this source would increase his income to the figure given Mr. Atherly. He had requested that the reply to his application should be mailed to him at

Pittsburg. Should the answer be favorable he could marry Evelyn. It would indicate that God had prepared a way by which he might obtain the desire of his heart.

But again doubts rose up to trouble him. He knew that Dr. Clifford was not friendly to him, had always been jealous of him—and especially so since the operation on Ben Gregor—and would leave nothing undone to prevent his appointment. Should his application be denied, it would mean that God did not want Evelyn to marry him.

And so in alternating moods of hope, fear and despair he endured the passing of the hours, until, just as evening was coming on, the train arrived at Pittsburg.

Springing from the steps before the cars had ceased moving, Grover Hart ran to the post office, inquired for his mail, and was handed an

182 Through Stress and Storm.

official looking document. Tearing open the envelope, in desperate haste, he read:

“— Railway Company.

“Office of Surgeon-in-Chief,

“PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 12, 18—.

“GROVER HART, M.D., Pittsburg, Pa.

“SIR: Replying to your application of Oct. 9th inst., I beg leave to say that Dr. Clifford has withdrawn his resignation as local surgeon for this company at Z—.

“Yours respectfully,

“A. B. CHESTER,

“Surgeon-in-Chief, — Ry. Co.”

Almost directly across the street from the post office was a dingy-looking building, on which was displayed the sign “Farmers’ Home.” Into this miserable shelter Grover Hart staggered rather than walked. He declined all suggestions of food—although he

had eaten nothing that day—and was shown to his room. Without undressing he threw himself upon the bed.

He was dimly conscious of a dull, torturing pain about his heart. Tiny rivulets of molten metal seemed to be coursing their throbbing way through his brain. But to these things he paid no heed.

His mind went back to the time when, in his little tent before Petersburg, he had first seen Evelyn's name. And his thoughts traced every event since then that related to Evelyn or to his love for her.

He tried to think wherein he had done wrong. Surely he must, in some way, have done wrong, else God would not punish him so cruelly. God had created Evelyn for him. Her ravishing beauty, her noble mind, her loving heart were all for him. Since Adam first met

Eve in Paradise, no mortal man had ever loved mortal woman as he loved Evelyn.

But though God had created Evelyn for him, and had brought her to him in such a way as to awaken all the intense, passionate, absorbing love of his soul for her, God had so hedged him about with poverty that he must either renounce Evelyn or marry her to the destruction of her happiness. What moral lesson could God teach the earth or the universe by such cruel mockery?

He would not give up his Evelyn! He loved her and she loved him. He would marry her, and neither God nor demons should prevent it!

Yes, he could marry her. Evelyn would marry him even if she knew of the bitter poverty which would be hers as his wife. If he were selfish enough, mean enough, cowardly enough to do so, he could drag her down from affluence to poverty, from happiness to misery.

God would not prevent him from marrying Evelyn. God had shown him that he ought not to marry her. But God would not compel him to do right, if he should choose to do wrong. Demons would rejoice if he were to marry Evelyn and thus ruin her life.

He could not understand why it should be so. He had always tried to do his very best for God. And now God was tearing his heart out of his bosom, and, with cruel torture, breaking his heartstrings one by one.

From the blessed unconsciousness which saved his reason, Grover Hart came back to consciousness but slowly. Where was he? What had happened? Something terrible, he knew. Something that made his heart ache and his brain burn. Yes, he remembered. His Evelyn was being taken away from him. He could hear, far away, the tones of a bell; not

ringing, but tolling, tolling. He wondered whether the bell was being tolled for Evelyn.

He opened his eyes. The room was dark, the night was cold and still. On the south side of the room he could see the outlines of a window. The shutters were closed, but through a crevice he could see a single star.

He must arise and write to Evelyn. If he should wait until morning he would not have the moral strength to do so. Groping on the table near his bed he found matches and lighted a dirty, foul-smelling lamp. Then he took from a drawer in the table a single sheet of paper and wrote:

“PITTSBURG, October 14th.

“**MY DEAR EVELYN:** You will doubtless be surprised at receiving a letter from me so soon, and still more surprised at what I write.

“I arrived here this evening and found a bit-

ter and cruel disappointment awaiting me. Its nature I cannot reveal even to you.

“On this account and for reasons which I cannot explain to you, I feel compelled to ask you to release me from my engagement to you.

“This request is not made because I do not love you. I love you as fondly, as tenderly as ever. But circumstances which I cannot disclose to you compel me to take this step.

“I do not know how I can add anything to this except to say—Farewell.

“Your unhappy lover,

“GROVER HART.”

To fold, seal and address this note was the work of a moment. And then the writer of the note sat for a few minutes, wearily, literally holding his fate in his hands.

“I must mail this to-night,” he said to himself. “Were I to wait until morning I should destroy it. In the company or even in the sight

of others, I should forget God. I am alone with God now and must do as He wills."

In the office of the hotel was a post-box. As Grover Hart was approaching it, there rose up from behind the desk a dirty-faced, unkempt boy of about ten years of age. "Sick, mister?" was his sententious inquiry.

"The approach to hell seems to be guarded by a very small demon," was the thought of Grover Hart as he muttered a negative reply to the boy's question.

He lifted the lid which covered the aperture of the box, and flung in the letter. Then as the full import of what he had done fell upon him, he suppressed a moan, turned and walked with tottering steps to the stairway. And as he was dragging himself up the stairs by clinging to the rail, there came into his mind his own words, spoken many months before: "There

are times when the most manly thing a man can do is to sit down and cry like a child." And from his heart went out a silent wail of agony, "Would to God that I could! Would to God that I could!"

Entering his room, he found his way to the window and threw open the blinds. The heavens were overcast with light clouds except in the south, where, in a clear space, glittered the star which he had seen a few moments before as its rays were falling on his face. It was the star Sirius!

IX.

Acting in Haste.

How Grover Hart made his way home from Pittsburgh, he never knew. He was afterward able to remember, but imperfectly, the fact of changing cars somewhere on the route; of being put off the train, about fifty miles west of his home, by an irate conductor who asked him—with ungentle sarcasm—whether he was drunk or only a fool; of going into his office in the early morning, falling upon a couch, and for more than a day and a night making no effort to arise.

He was a physician, but it did not occur to him that he was ill. Had he given the most casual professional consideration to his own case, it would have been plain to him that the

mental strain which he had undergone had brought on a low, nervous fever, with semidelirium; that he needed medical treatment, care and rest. He was conscious of only one thing. that a terrible calamity had befallen him; that all that made life of any value to him had been taken away at one stroke; that whatever the future might bring, life must be a burden and a sorrow to the end.

He was too weak to pray for death; and had he been able to do so it would have availed him nothing. Very seldom does death accept the invitation of those who desire his coming. He is too busily engaged in visiting those who are filled with sorrow and terror at the announcement of his approach.

When Grover Hart had so far recovered that he was able to receive and visit his patients, he took up the duties of his profession in a spirit-

less, mechanical way that indicated an utter want of interest in the things which had always been of most absorbing interest to him. Instead of the pleasant smile with which his face had been habitually lighted, his countenance wore an expression of most profound sadness. In place of his usual cheerful, frank demeanor, his manner became cold, abstracted, almost sullen. All this was noted by the village gossips, and many were the speculations as to the cause of the change; but the truth was not even suspected.

It was a little more than a week after his return home when Grover Hart took from his lock-box at the post office a letter, which he saw at a glance was from Evelyn Atherly. He was not expecting to receive a letter from her. He had not once thought that she might or would reply to his letter to her. But his mind

was so incapable of any emotion that he felt no surprise at receiving the letter nor curiosity as to its contents.

Returning leisurely to his office he tore open the envelope as he would that of a business letter and read :

“PHILADELPHIA, October 20th.

“I have received your letter written from Pittsburg on the 14th inst. I cannot in any way express the surprise and grief which I felt on receiving such a message from you. In some way I knew before opening it that it brought sorrow to me. Even the handwriting seemed to be strange and unnatural.

“I cannot understand why you have treated me so cruelly. Had you never spoken to me of love, and had you ended our correspondence at once on your return home after seeing me, I should have regretted losing you as a friend, but I should have had no reason to complain of

your conduct in any respect. But when you professed to love me, I accepted your professions without question, and believed, as well as hoped, that I could make your life happier than it had ever been.

"Why your feelings should change toward me so suddenly I cannot even imagine. In your note you refer to a disappointment which you experienced at Pittsburg, but you did not take the pains to tell me what it was. It could not have been in the amount of money you were to receive there, as I remember that you spoke of it as a small sum.

"But it is not at all necessary that I should know why you have changed. It only remains for me to write the words you desire—namely, that you are free. And with these words goes my sincere wish that your life may be happier than mine can ever be.

"I do not need to add that I do not wish to hear from you again in any way.

"EVELYN AATHERLY,"

The reading of this letter awakened no emotion of any kind in the mind of Grover Hart. He read it through hurriedly, though carefully, destroyed it at once, and turned to his work as indifferently as he would from the reading of an advertisement.

Why this was so he was never afterward able to divine. Indeed he could never make it real to himself that he was the one who wrote the letter from Pittsburg, and received the one which came in reply to it. To him these events always seemed like parts of a story which he had heard or read; not an experience of his own. But when he came to himself—as he did after less than two weeks of mental exile—his self-condemnation knew no limit. He made no attempt to palliate his offense on the ground that when it was committed he was ill, and his mind so wrought upon by disappointment and anxiety

that his mental faculties were like driftwood on the ocean, to be driven wheresoever the winds and waves might will. He felt that whatever his physical or mental condition was, or might have been, his sin against God, against Evelyn, and against himself was inexcusable, unpardonable.

He denounced himself as a villain and a coward. He was a villain to win the love of the best and noblest of womankind, and then basely renounce her. He could not blame himself for loving her, nor for telling her of his love. But after asking her to marry him, he should have kept his promise to her, even though such a course might have brought unhappiness to her.

He was a coward in fearing to face the future with implicit, unquestioning faith in God, in Evelyn and in himself. He had many times

talked very glibly and very piously, in the covenant meetings of his church, about his faith in God. But the very first time that God had called on him to exercise an infinitesimal amount of faith, he had shown that his boasting of faith was but a shallow, hypocritical pretense.

God had ransacked the universe to find the richest, choicest material out of which to form Evelyn for him; had created her, brought her to him, and literally placed her in his arms, and he—like the cowardly cur that he was—had in a senseless panic thrown her away.

If he had no faith in God, he ought to have had faith in Evelyn. Had he married her extreme poverty might and probably would have been their lot. But with youth and health and, above all, their soul-satisfying love for each other, Evelyn as well as he would have been supremely happy, though a garret might have been

their only home, a crust of bread and a pitcher of water their only fare.

When the message of disappointment came to him at Pittsburg, instead of acting like a frightened child, he ought to have written Evelyn in a brave, manly way, telling her of the failure of his prospects, revealing to her his true financial condition, and leaving to her the decision of the question whether their engagement should or should not continue.

She would have been true to her word and to him. She would have taken him for richer or poorer. She would have known that with his youth, his ambition, his ability in his profession, he could lift himself and her out of a condition of poverty to one of comparative comfort.

It was hard to be compelled to acknowledge to himself that he was a villain; much harder to have to despise himself as a coward. But after

a fair and impartial trial before the tribunal of his own conscience—a trial in which Grover Hart was his own accuser, defender and judge; a trial lasting many days, and in which everything that could be urged in favor of or against the accused was duly considered—he was compelled to pronounce himself guilty of cowardice so base in its nature and so deplorable in its consequences as not to be distinguishable from downright villainy.

This conclusion reached, all that remained to be done was to pronounce the doom of the culprit. And he determined that the punishment should be as severe as he could devise. He knew that for him there could be no forgiveness. Were he to ask it, neither Evelyn nor her friends could ever pardon an offense so gross and inexcusable. The last sentence of Evelyn's letter clearly indicated that. Indeed, he could

never have the assurance to ask it. More unwise than Esau of old, he had basely relinquished the greatest blessing heaven or earth could give; and for him there could be found no place for repentance, though he might seek it with prayers and with tears.

His punishment should be such as to keep constantly before his mind his sin, its enormity, and its consequences. And so he made a solemn vow before Almighty God that, as long as he should live, he would never forgive himself; never cease to upbraid and reproach himself for his culpable wickedness; that he would never allow himself anything in the nature of self-indulgence, however little it might be. And he would bear this self-imposed burden bravely and without complaint. God would never trust him again. Unfaithful as he had been in the hour of greatest responsibility, God

could not well confide to him responsibility in small matters. Whatever work he would do for God, must be done unasked, undesired.

But he could and would work for his fellow-men. He could help heal the sick, comfort the afflicted, and bring a little light and peace into darkened homes and shadowed lives. He would walk humbly and softly before the Lord all his days, in the bitterness of his soul, remembering at every step of his way through life the immeasurable difference between what he was and what he might have been had he married Evelyn. His punishment, like that of Cain, might be greater than he could bear. But he would endure it to the end of his life; and if remorse, grief and deprivation should shorten his days, so much the better.

Having thus marked out for himself the course of his life, Grover Hart delayed not for

an hour to enter the path which his feet must thereafter tread. But grievous as he knew the way must be, the resolution which he formed, to walk uncomplainingly through the fires of the hell he had made for himself, seemed to allay, to some extent, the turbulence of his emotions.

He again took up his professional duties, not with pleasure, nor with zest, but with faithfulness. His former manner he also resumed as suddenly as he had laid it aside. To wear an air of cheerfulness was a duty, he reasoned within himself, and his sin and suffering in no way absolved him from this duty. However much his heart might ache, his face must wear a smile.

He gave much thought to the subject of ways by which he could humiliate and afflict himself, without detriment to the welfare or happiness of others. There was very little that he could do

in this direction more than he had always done. So far as material comforts went, he could hardly deprive himself of anything which his poverty permitted without injury to his health. And he could not reason himself into the belief that it would be right for him to commit suicide, by either direct or indirect means.

Moreover, there was no pain or suffering which he could inflict upon his physical being, even were he to become a flagellant, which could be worthy of his effort as compared with the crucifixion of soul which was his daily, hourly experience.

Whenever he was alone, and his mind otherwise unemployed, he compelled himself to fix his thoughts on one subject: Evelyn, her beauty, her love, her trust; his own weakness and folly and his immeasurable loss.

He could recall every word of the last letter

written by her to him. And his soul seemed to quiver with anguish—even as his flesh would have quivered under a white-hot iron—as he remembered her accusation of unfaithfulness. He knew that whenever she might think of him she would believe that he had changed, that he had ceased to love her; when in truth he had never for one instant ceased to love her with a love so absorbing, so devoted, so intense, that the loss of her was filling his whole being with acutest agony.

If Evelyn could only know; if in some way he could tell her that he did love her; that he was not faithless to her in a single thought; that he had never ceased to love her, and could never cease to love her. But no, he ought not to tell her this. She ought never to know it. She could not forgive him; she would despise him but little less than he despised himself.

Better that she should not know. It must be a part of his punishment to feel that Evelyn did not, could not know how tenderly, how madly he loved her.

The remorseful self-condemnatory reflections with which Grover Hart reproached himself, day after day, were marked by no outward manifestation of the mental pain which tortured him. He did not walk the floor, nor wring his hands; and there was no one near him to mark how his face paled and great drops of moisture stood on his brow. But his sufferings left their impress, and gradually his face became pallid and thin, dark circles formed under his eyes, and his manner, though habitually cheerful and kindly toward all whom he met, became more and more abstracted and grave.

These indications of a mind oppressed were noticed by only a few of those whom he met

casually and occasionally, as he had no intimate associates and eschewed society altogether.

One of the few was Mrs. Callender, who, from the time when he was a mere boy, had always taken a motherly interest in him. And so, on one occasion when he was making a professional visit to the Callender homestead, that good lady took him vigorously in hand.

"I wish you were my boy," she said, "so that I could give you a good shaking! What ails you, anyway, Grover Hart? You go around acting as solemn as if you had lost your last friend on earth. And you look as if you didn't have half enough to eat and as if your clothes were thrown on in any way that came handy. Why don't you take some pains with yourself and spruce up, and look neat and sleek and trim as you used to look? You need a wife more than you need anything else in this world. You

ought to marry some good, capable girl who would look after you and keep you tidy. Why don't you get married, I'd like to know?"

Her words were like dagger-thrusts to poor Grover Hart, but he laughed as if her suggestion were the greatest joke imaginable, and answered :

"I get married! Who on earth would marry me?"

"Who wouldn't marry you? you'd better ask. There are mighty few out of any number of nice, marriageable girls in the State of Ohio who wouldn't marry you out of hand, and you know it. But if you haven't ambition enough or spunk enough to look around for yourself, until some one points out a girl to you, I can tell you of one who would make just the right kind of a wife for you. Why don't you think of Grace Coburn? There's a girl for you!"

Handsome, well-educated, industrious, economical. What do you or any man want in a wife more than that? You could make a good home for her and save her from wearing out her life in teaching. And you would be somebody yourself then. And you ought to know that you never will be anybody nor amount to anything, as long as you go about moping like a solitary gander in one corner of a goose pasture."

This apparently idle chatter of a silly old woman disturbed the mind of Grover Hart more than he would have cared to acknowledge, even to himself. The subject of her talk was not merely distasteful; the thought of marrying was to him most repulsive. For hours after he had hurried away from the presence of Mrs. Callender, he vainly tried to drive the whole matter out of his mind. And when, in spite of himself, there came to his remembrance her ad-

vice to him to marry, he fairly shuddered with disgust.

But at that instant there came into his mind a suggestion so clear and forcible that it seemed to him that some unseen being must have uttered in his ear the words, "If the thought of marrying any one except Evelyn pains you, what would be the reality? If you seek anguish of mind, why not find it here?"

At first he felt like crying out to God to inflict on him any punishment save that. Then he reflected that God had no part in his punishment. He was his own judge, and the executioner of his own sentence.

He had vowed to make his life as hard and bitter as possible. Nothing else that could be devised would be such a constant, so maddening a reminder of his sin and loss as to see by his fireside and at his table

210 Through Stress and Storm.

hour after hour and day after day, a face which was not the face of Evelyn.

But it would be adding villainy to villainy, were he to pretend to feel one spark of love for any woman save Evelyn. And what living woman, knowing the truth, would marry him? If he should marry, he must marry some woman who could not love him, and who would marry him knowing that he did not love her.

Naturally he thought of Grace Coburn. She could not love him, that was certain. Her heart had been irrevocably given to the graceless scamp who had made love to her as a holiday diversion. Would it not be right for him to ask her to accept a home with him, take the honorable protection of his name and share his fortunes—or misfortunes—with the understanding that there was no love on his part for her, none on her part for him?

Such an arrangement, if entered into from a mercenary or other unworthy motive, would be a foul crime. But his motive in marrying her would be unquestionably right in the sight of God, and would be according to the dictates of his own conscience. And should she consent to marry him, her reason for so doing would at least be an innocent one.

There was no need that he should tell her that his object in marrying her was to punish himself for not marrying another. To her such a thought would seem ridiculous. If he should tell her truly that he did not love her, but that he would treat her as kindly and care for her as anxiously and zealously as if he did love her, this would be all that the most delicate conscience could require of him.

He had no idea that she would listen to his proposition for a moment. But conscientious

fidelity to the vow he had made before the Lord demanded of him that he should marry Grace Coburn, if she should be willing to marry him. By what obliquity or perversity of his moral or mental nature he reached this conclusion, he was never afterward able to understand. And this was not the only case in the history of mankind, in which the leadings of an active, enlightened conscience were opposed to every principle of casuistry.

X.

"All's Well That Ends Well."

WITH Grover Hart action followed hard after resolution. It was but a day or two after his talk with Mrs. Callender that he determined to make an offer of marriage to Grace Coburn. The evening of the same day found him in her presence.

With a frankness that was almost blunt, he made known to her the object of his visit. She listened with no little surprise, while he told her of his love for another, and of the hopelessness of his passion. But he gave her no hint or clew by which she could ever be able to identify the one of whom he spoke.

Very delicately he referred to her own heart-history, and then suggested, rather than asked,

that as they were similarly situated, they should unite their lives, interests and fortunes.

Grace Coburn did not even blush at this suggestion, but at first seemed rather amused at the thought of their agreeing to marry, like two small children, without a shadow of love on the part of either for the other. In a moment her face became grave as she said: "But I do not love you, and you do not love me. Why then should we marry?"

"Why should we not?" was his ready answer. "You say that you do not love me. So I assumed before I spoke. I assume also that you can never love me. To be plain with you, if I believed that there could ever be a time when you would love me, I should not wish you to marry me. Because, much as I respect and esteem you, I can never give you the love which I have given and still give to another,

and which I can neither recall nor withhold. You and I are on an equal footing in that regard, and I am not asking of you that which I cannot give.

"But I respect, esteem and admire you. If you respect me; if you believe me to be honest and trustworthy; why should the fact that you do not, cannot love me prevent your acceptance of a home such as I offer you? And why should my inability to love you prevent me from offering you a home and caring for you while we both live? Would we be acting reasonably, sensibly, if—under the circumstances as they exist—we were to remain single all our days?"

"I do not wish to give you an answer now," said Grace, after a silence of several minutes. "I want to consider the matter and decide it when you are not by to influence my decision.

I will write to you within a week from this time. But I want to tell you before you go," she said, as her visitor rose to depart, "that if I should refuse your offer it will not be from any feeling of dislike toward you or distrust of you on my part. On the contrary, I both respect and admire you. I have always liked you from the time when you were a young boy and I a little girl. And ever since the hour when you and I stood together at the bedside of poor Ben Gregor, and you unconsciously revealed to me your gentleness, nobility and courage, I have admired you more than I should care to tell you. But— Good-by. You shall hear from me soon."

It was three days after his conversation with Grace Coburn when Grover Hart received the reply for which he had been looking with more of interest than anxiety. It ran thus:

"HOME, December 2, 18—.

"DEAR DR. HART: Since I last saw you I have given very earnest consideration to the subject we then discussed, and have come to a conclusion in regard to it. If I loved you, and you had no love for me, I would not marry you. If you loved me, and I did not love you, you could not induce me to marry you, though you were to lay the wealth of the world at my feet.

"But as you neither offer me nor ask of me more than each of us can give to the other—namely, respect, regard and confidence—I am willing to do the best I can toward making your life a successful if not a happy one, if you wish me to try. Respectfully,

"GRACE COBURN."

Grover Hart winced a little when he read the latter part of this letter, remembering as he did that his object in asking Grace to marry him was not to promote his happiness, but the

reverse. For a brief moment it may be that his mind dimly perceived the truth that to marry a bright, generous girl like Grace Coburn for the purpose of being miserable in her society, was such a perversion of the holy design of matrimony as to be obnoxious to every sensible way of thinking, as well as to every righteous rule of action.

But so obstinate and absorbing was Grover Hart's determination to punish himself, that both Reason and Conscience were denied admission to the presence chamber of his mind, and audience was given to Will alone. And so a few lines to Grace conveyed his acknowledgment of her note, and, in language that was positively cold, his thanks for her acceptance of his offer.

And when he called on her, after the lapse of a few days from the time of receiving her note,

the subject of their approaching marriage was treated in a way which was as business-like as would have befitted the engagement of her services as a teacher. As there was to be no courtship, no love-making, an early date for the marriage was agreed upon. And then the two went their separate ways; he to his patients, she to teach until the end of the school term, and then make a few simple preparations for the wedding. So far as Grover Hart was concerned, the matter of his intended marriage did not occupy his thoughts or attention to so great an extent as did the condition and symptoms of his patients. He made no plans for the future; nor did he look forward to his wedding day with so much as a feeling of interest.

But a little more than two weeks after his formal engagement to Grace, Grover Hart was surprised to receive a note from her asking him

to call on her as soon as he should receive her message. It puzzled him a little to conjecture what she could wish to say to him that required anything like haste on his part.

While on the way to the home of Grace Coburn, something like conscience awoke in the mind of Grover Hart as he thought how far from lover-like his conduct toward Grace had been. During the time that they had been engaged he had taken pains to call on her but once; and although she was his promised wife he had never so much as spoken one affectionate word to her, had never once pressed his lips to hers.

True, he did not love her, and she could have no reason to expect that he would manifest a sentiment he could not feel. But she had a right to expect that he would show, by both his words and his conduct, that he had at least an

affectionate regard for her. And he made it a matter of solemn deliberation whether, at the conclusion of his interview with Grace, he ought not to say a few warmly appreciative words to her and offer her a kiss.

But before he had reached a decision of this momentous question, he arrived at his destination. He could not help observing that Grace's manner toward him, though pleasant and friendly, was even more reserved than usual, and there was something in her face which revealed the fact that she had hardly emerged from a severe mental struggle. With good sense and genuine courtesy she did not wait for her visitor to ask why she wished to see him, but at once took the initiative.

"I have asked you to call," she said, "because I have something important to say to you. And it is also important that it should be said

as soon as possible. You have always been so kind to me, you have always appreciated me so much more highly than I have deserved, and you are so sensible withal, that I have no fear that you will think me either fickle or foolish when I ask you to release me from my engagement to you. I should feel that I ought to, that I must do this, even if it should cause you pain to release me. But I am glad to know that even if you should feel some regret at the destruction of your plans, it will cause you no real sorrow to give me up."

"But may I ask why you make this request?" inquired Hart, too much surprised to know whether he was or was not sorry.

"You certainly may," was the answer. "And I was about to tell you as well as I may be able, although I shall probably fail to make the reason at all clear to you. It is not because

of what you are or are not. Neither is it on account of anything which you have done or failed to do. I respect you, esteem you, admire you even more than I did on the day when you asked me to marry you.

"But I cannot marry you, because you do not love me and I do not love you. You may think it strange that this should be the reason, in view of the fact that I knew all this from the first. But I knew it and yet I did not know it—that is, I did not realize it as I do now.

"I shall not be able to make you understand just what my thoughts and feelings are, because you are not a woman. In all my consideration of the question whether I should or should not marry you, I thought [only] of our mental association with each other as husband and wife. I did not want to marry you so that you could provide me with food and clothing.

I can do that for myself. I did not think of marrying you for a home. I have a good home now, and I have no fear but that I can always have one as long as I live.

"But I appreciate your intellectual gifts and acquirements to such an extent that I am actually proud of them and of you, although you are only my friend; and I need not tell you that I should be much more proud of you, were you my husband.

"And I could not help picturing to myself the happiness it would bring me to share your confidence; to talk with you of your studies, your researches, your work; to sit with you in the light of the evening lamp and read to you, or hear you read to me; to talk with you of all the things that interest you; to cheer and encourage you in all the plans, the purposes, the achievements of your noble life. God could

never give me a happier heaven than such a life with you would be, if only I loved you.

"And on the day when you called here after receiving my note, though we talked little except concerning our marriage, I was so pleased with your manner and charmed by your conversation, that I felt very complacent over my good fortune as your promised wife. But after you had gone, it occurred to me that you did not even shake hands with me when you came nor when you went, and that you had never taken me in your arms, nor kissed me, although I knew this to be both usual and proper in the case of affianced lovers; and somehow I found myself shuddering at the very thought of your doing so.

"This fact was a disturbing one and led me to reflect—as I never before had done—that while we were betrothed, we were not lovers;

and that our marriage would involve something more to me than caring for our home, preparing our meals, keeping your wardrobe in order and talking or reading with you.

"Did I love you and did you love me, it would be no sacrifice for me to sink my individuality wholly in yours; to resign myself, my heart, mind and physical being to your care, guidance and protection; to let my heart respond to every impulse of your heart toward me; to let your mind so dominate my own that your thoughts should be my thoughts, your wishes my will; to have you take me in your arms, hold me to your heart, and take from my willing lips kisses of pure love and passionate devotion. As it is, the very thought of such a thing fills me with aversion amounting almost to positive loathing.

"Were I married to you, I should within a

few months, in spite of myself, hate your very presence. And have you ever thought"—and as she said these words she averted her face, placed her arm on the arm of her chair and dropped her forehead on her arm—"that if we were to marry and live together as husband and wife, it might be that we should not always be the only inmates of our household? And have you thought, further, that, in that case, those whom God might send into our home for us to care for, nurture and rear, might be your children, might be my children, but—though born in purity and honor—they could never be, in any true sense, our children?

"You may think that my entertaining such thoughts is unmaidenly—indecent, if you will; but I am a woman," and she raised her head, turned her face toward him, her cheeks crimson, her eyes wet but gleaming with emotion, as

she continued, "and God gave me my womanhood as a holy trust, to be preserved in its purity. And I should be false to God and to my own soul, were I to suffer this temple of the Holy Spirit to be profaned by that which is unholy or unclean. And there is nothing so unholy, so unclean, so defiling to the moral nature as a marriage without mutual love, let the excuse for such a marriage be what it may."

"You cannot realize how hard it has been for me to compel myself to say all this to you. But I gave you my promise, and you have a right to know every reason which influences me to recall that promise. And moreover, you are a pure-minded, Christian gentleman; the only man on earth to whom I could open my heart as I have to you.

"God only knows what it would be to me, could we love one another. But as it is, much

as I honor you, and though I could never have a shadow of respect for the being who won my heart only to break it, still, if he were now standing by your side, and I were given the choice to marry you or to marry him, I should marry him and not you; and in so deciding I should be doing right.

" 'Our gifts once given must there abide;
We have no heart
To change our gifts, though vain.'

"I am not going to say that 'I'll be a sister to you,'" she went on, as Dr. Hart remained silent, because there was really nothing to say. "I could never be a sister to you. But whether you wish it or not, I shall be your true friend and most enthusiastic admirer as long as I live."

Grover Hart went from the presence of Grace

Coburn with his mind in a state of turmoil on account of the manner in which his engagement to her had been terminated. He could not feel offended by what she had done; she had left him no reasonable ground for taking offense; and not being in love with her, he could not claim a lover's privilege of feeling offended without reason.

And the more he thought of her reason for breaking the engagement, the more clearly he perceived his folly and moral perversity in contemplating a marriage with her. So keen became the reproaches of his conscience for the wrong he intended, that he began to question his right to go at large. He queried whether he ought not to denounce himself to the authorities and be sent to prison as one not having sufficient practical knowledge of the distinctions between that which is right and that which is

wrong, in a given case, to be given the liberty usually permitted to members of society.

In this frame of mind he entered the post office, and was there given a letter at sight of which his heart stood still. For in everything except the date of the postmark, the envelope was a duplicate of the one which was delivered to him at the post office in Pittsburg on that terrible evening in October but a few months before. Hardly realizing what he was doing he opened it and read :

"— Railway Company,
"Office of Surgeon-in-chief,
"PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 18, 18—.

"GROVER HART, M.D., Z—, Ohio.

"DEAR SIR: Not until within the past two weeks was any information received at the general offices of this road concerning the accident which occurred to Mr. Gregor, an employee of this company, one year ago last June.

232 Through Stress and Storm.

"For some unaccountable reason, the section foreman failed to report the accident. And as Dr. Clifford was not called to attend the case, no report was furnished from that quarter.

"About two weeks ago Mr. Gregor presented a claim against this company for compensation in damages on account of the injury. His statement that he was the victim of an accident while in the service of this road, led to an investigation. This investigation brought out the fact that it was through your manly courage and surgical skill that Gregor's life was saved, and—incidentally—the company protected from liability for such damages as might have been recoverable had the result been otherwise.

"The claim of Mr. Gregor has been amicably and satisfactorily adjusted. But the officers of the company do not feel that the matter ought to be dismissed, so far as you are concerned, with nothing more than the expression of their thanks.

"I have the pleasure of informing you that you have been appointed general assistant surgeon for this company from this date. This appointment will interfere somewhat with your practice in your own behalf, but you will be at liberty to devote as much time as you choose to general practice, provided you hold yourself in readiness to respond to any calls which the company may make upon you.

"Your salary will be two thousand dollars for the first year, with such increase from time to time thereafter as your ability and usefulness to the company may justify. You will please report at this office, at your early convenience, for further instructions as to your duties.

"Yours truly,

"A. B. CHESTER, M.D.,
"Surgeon-in-Chief, —— Ry. Co."

Any strong emotion sent the thoughts of Grover Hart to the Bible. From this book his

mind seemed at once to extract the very sentence or clause most expressive of his thoughts or feelings. On this occasion his soul seemed to descend into the depths of the valley of humiliation and shame under the force of the words, "The Lord shall have them in derision." It seemed to him that the Lord of the universe was deriding him for his weakness and folly.

In the hour of his great trial he had forgotten that "it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." He had presumptuously insisted that God should send to him, at Pittsburgh, a certain indication of His will that he should marry Evelyn. God had refused to be dictated to in any such manner; had left him to take counsel of his own foolish fears, and to suffer the terrible consequences. God was now demonstrating to him the folly as well as the wickedness of his course.

One who might have observed the trembling hand and pale, haggard face of Grover Hart as he replaced Dr. Chester's letter in the envelope and walked with uncertain steps out of the post office, would hardly have thought him to be one who had just received what ought to have been good news.

It was not until three days had elapsed after receiving notice of his appointment, that Grover Hart had so far recovered from the soul-sickness caused by the reflections which the intelligence of his appointment produced in his mind, as to be able to undertake the journey to Philadelphia.

His business at the railway offices occupied the greater part of the afternoon of the day of his arrival. At the conclusion of his interview with Dr. Chester, he paid a brief visit to Independence Hall, and thence took

his way along C—— Street, observant only of the fact that the light of the short, December day had well-nigh faded from the western sky.

As he was scanning the heavens, according to his habit from early boyhood, his eye rested on the planet Venus, then at its brightest, shining like a small moon among the lesser luminaries that adorned the sky. And as he fixed his attention steadily upon the planet that had once been to him the Star of Love, the feeling of anguish which for weeks and months had never left him by day or by night, seemed to grow less keen and there crept into his heart a feeling that was akin to peace.

So absorbed was the mind of Grover Hart in the contemplation of the star, that he failed to see a carriage standing at the curbstone, a footman holding the door open for a lady who was walking rapidly toward the carriage with the

manifest intention of entering it. He was recalled to the things of this earth by becoming aware that he had rudely collided with some one. Turning to apologize, the next fact of which he was conscious was that he was holding the hand of Evelyn Atherly in his own, and was talking to her in tones so low that the footman standing a few feet away could not distinguish the words, but in a voice so broken, so hurried and so strange that he seemed like one demented.

"Wait a moment!" he said; "I must speak to you! I did not change toward you. You wronged me in thinking that I did. I never loved you more than I did when I wrote that foolish, wicked letter. I have always loved you. I shall always love you. I do not ask you to forgive me. I know that you can never forgive me for my wickedness and folly. I can

never forgive myself. But, as God hears me, I have never ceased to love you, and I wrote that brutal letter because I loved you more than I loved my life."

After the first shock of surprise and alarm at being so suddenly and rudely detained by one so changed by mental suffering that at first she did not recognize him, Evelyn listened calmly to his wild words until he paused. Then she replied, somewhat coldly: "When I received your letter I could not understand why you wrote it. Nor can I now understand how you could have inflicted upon me such disappointment, sorrow and suffering, if you had any love for me. But I should be willing to hear your explanation, if it were not for the fact that I have heard that you are to marry another. Such being the case it would be wrong for you to try to explain your conduct toward me, as it

is wrong for me to talk with you as we are now doing. Please release my hand and let me go."

Instead of complying with her request, Grover Hart closed his hand on Evelyn's even more vigorously than before as he said, vehemently: "That was true, but it isn't true now. I was a fool, a coward, a villain! But I never pretended to love any one but you. I am not promised to any one, I am never going to marry any one! And I don't want to let you go till you tell me that you believe me, that you believe that I have always loved you and that I love you now. Will you not tell me so?" he asked, his tones losing their decided ring and becoming tremulous and tender.

"I can believe what you tell me," she answered in sympathetic accents. "I do believe you. And I do not know why I should not forgive you as well, although you do not ask it.

And if it were not that you are so determined never to marry, I could see no good reason why everything between us should not be as it was before you wrote me that cruel letter."

Neither Grover Hart nor Evelyn Atherly were aware of the fact that Venus was letting her clear, mellow rays fall upon them as he asked, eagerly:

"Then may I keep your hand?"

Not until that instant had she once lifted her gaze from an apparent study of the sidewalk on which they were standing. But at his question, the eyes which had first disclosed their glorious beauty to him on the banks of the Maumee, were lifted to his own, and her answer fell upon his ears in one softly-spoken word:

"Forever!"

THE END.

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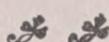
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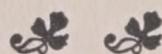
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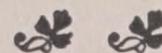
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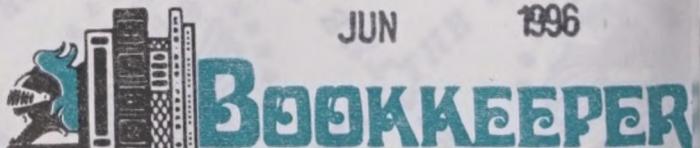
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